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Assistant { RICHARD ALDINGTON. Editor: DORA MARSDEN, B.A.  
Editors: { LEONARD A. COMPTON-RICKETT. CONTENTS.

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## LIBERTY, LAW, AND DEMOCRACY.

THE concepts with which one age will preoccupy itself, and in which it will invest its surplus emotional heat have shown themselves to be so essentially casual as to be now a matter for mirth rather than wonder with its successors. The subject of an age's Master Passion round which its interest rages will be anything accidental and contingent which will serve: stand the heat, that is, and last out until enthusiasm tires. The amount of genuine enthusiasm which Athanasius, Arius and their followers were able to cull from the numerical problems in the concept of the Trinity was—incredible though it may seem—equal to that which this age culls from the figures of the football scores. The Crusaders who were so concerned about the possession of the Tomb of Christ looked forward to finding as much diversion and profit as a Home Ruler expects to get from the possession of a Parliament on Dublin Green. It is only from a distance that these dead dogs look so determinedly dead. Nearer to, one would swear the body had stirred; and we who are so near to an age when the mere mention of "Universal Law" would produce lyrical intoxication, "All's love, All's law," a very swoon of security, do not purpose here to break in upon the belated obsequies of that dead or dying concept. As the sport of the ribald and the mockers "Universal law" is the perquisite of the youth of 1950, not of 1915. And we will not here trespass on the future.

The reference in the title of this article is limited to statutory law, a prosaic and earth-bound branch which not even Apollo himself could have strung to the lyrical note, and it must be allowed that however excellent a run "Universal Law" as a symbol and

idealised concept may have been accorded by a generation now settled in obesity, its society representative, so to speak, with which we are here concerned, has never been held in any too high esteem. The increase in its bulk and scope of application, which oddly enough, grows rapidly alongside something called the "Liberty of the people" have proved matters for complexity even when they have not created indignation and alarm. Visions of those not the least penetrating, have seen in the steady advance of the statutory law a devastating plague in which the parchment of the politicians has seemed as capable of devouring the spirit of the people as a swarm of locusts devouring green grass. Proudhon writing in 1850 on the subject says:

"Laws and ordinances fall like hail on the poor populace. After a while the political soil will be covered with a layer of paper, and all the geologists will have to do will be to list it, under the name of *papyraceous formation*, among the epochs of the earth's history. The Convention, in three years one month and four days, issued eleven thousand six hundred laws and decrees; the Constituent and Legislative Assemblies had produced hardly less; the empire and the later governments have wrought as industriously. At present the 'Bulletin des Lois' contains, they say, more than fifty thousand; if our representatives did their duty this enormous figure would soon be doubled. Do you believe that the populace, or the government itself, can keep its sanity in this labyrinth?"

And yet, while no one would care to dispute these facts or deny they had significance, it is the libertarian interpretation of them which provides the clue

to the mystery why the gospel of liberty carries with it so little conviction. The Libertarian creed has no "bite" in it; "Liberty" remains the "beautiful and ineffectual angel." In its devouter moments common speech will accept the gospel, but common sense invariably slips past it. While not wishing to hurt its feelings, so to speak, it refuses to have any serious dealings with it. Now common sense is quite prepared to be serious about statutory law, even where it is suspicious of it. It is willing to hear law described as a threatening power and will think out ways and means of cutting its claws: but "liberty" it does not discuss. The discussion for and against the "principle of liberty" appears similar to a discussion on the ultimate and eternal implications involved in the "principle" in which one wins or loses a game of patience: or the principle of that popular child's game where one "arranges" either to tread on every chink in the pavement or to avoid treading on every chink. "You do, if you do, and don't if you don't."

It is however only when one gets at the temper behind law and realises its permanent nature that it becomes apparent why discussions concerning liberty are more or less frivolous diversions, and nothing makes law more clear than considering it under that form of "government" which has promoted its luxuriant growth—democracy.

A law means that "state" support is guaranteed on behalf of an interest which has obviously already sufficient power to command it. This law has a reverse side to it which implies a "state" guarantee to repress another interest or interests, too weak to command its support. Democracy, putting aside its alliterative and rhetorical jargon, means just the quickening of the pace at which these alliances of the State with owners of "interests" are put through. Representation of people is an impossibility. It is intended for platform purposes only, but representation of interests is a very real thing, one which can be judged with precision as to its efficacy or no. An "interest" is the particularised line of fulfilment which the accomplishment of a willed purpose takes. At points it breaks into and clashes with other interests: and at these points it becomes necessary for their owners to fight the situation out.

These are the precise points where rhetoricians and moralists try to work in their spoof. The people have "a right to" protection from invasion of their interests, and owners of "interests" should "respect" each other's interests. The "liberty" of each and all "should" be "respected." One "should" repress one's interest when likely to interfere with another's.

The fact to be borne in mind is that whether one "should" or "should not," the strong natures never do. The powerful allow "respect for others' interests" to remain the exclusive foible of the weak. The tolerance they have for others' "interests" is not "respect" but indifference. The importance of furthering one's own interests does not leave sufficient energy really to accord much attention to those of others. It is only when others' interests thrust themselves obtrudingly across one's own that indifference vanishes: because they have become possible allies or obstacles. If the latter, the fundamental lack of respect swiftly defines itself. In face of opposition to a genuine interest, its owner respects neither "his neighbour's ox, his ass, his wife, his manservant, his maidservant, nor anything that is his." Not even his opinions. One has only to think what jolly old proselytisers the world's "great" men have been to realise what "respect" they have for their neighbour's interests. What each has been concerned for has been to see his will worked upon any soul or body upon which his whim or purpose has seen fit to direct it. Their success has been proportional to the unformedness of the characters with which they have had immediately to deal.

If it is borne in mind that genuine "interests" are things which are never abandoned: that smaller

interests are sacrificed ("sacrifice" being a word which has no meaning apart from an audience: it means a virtue, i.e. something likely to win the applause of an audience, for an act which did no audience look on we should do as a matter of course) for a bigger interest as we should "sacrifice" small change of, say, eight half-crowns for a guinea, we can clear "democracy" of its bluff and remove the complexity which the multiplicity of statutory laws creates. They are seen to be two names for one phenomenon. Democracy is government, i.e. persuasion by compulsion exercised from a largely increased number of centres. Multiplicity of laws indicates the detailed channels through which it is effected. It is too vague to say that democracy represents the liberty of the people: rather one would say democracy represented the increase in the number of people who are prepared to take liberties (i.e. persuade by personal violence), with the people who refuse assistance in the furthering of the audacious ones' interests. It is the increase in the number of those who have the courage and ingenuity to become in an open and unequivocal fashion the tyrants we all are subtly and by instinct. It is part of the human trend towards explicitness. If "democracy" had no "believers"—no followers whose voices break with lyric intoxication at mention of it, its clean swash-buckling character would be in no danger of being misunderstood. As it is, we are seldom permitted to view it, save through the veil of brotherhood, love and what not, as it steps forward like a mincing lady with a Clergyman on the one hand and a Wizard on the other: Liberty and the State, companions not chosen in stupidity.

It is not by accident for instance that Democracy and Liberty preach in pairs. Liberty is as necessary to Democracy as the second blade is to a pair of shears. Democracy boldly affirms government: Liberty whispers "Don't govern." Liberty plays 'Conscience with a task to't.' It is the ghostly spirit the moralists would have the meek always carry inside their waistcoats: it plays the policeman inside the man. Unfortunately for the meek, it is only on them that Liberty is able to impose. Those who *can* govern, i.e. forward their own interest to the detriment of those who let them, *will* govern. Those who feel no stomach for "governing" will espouse the gospel of liberty. That is why to those who already have, shall be given and from those which have not shall be taken away that which they have. The cry for "liberty" is the plea for the substitution of melodrama for drama in life: the life according to concept in place of life according to power. It is the hoisting of the white flag followed by an attempt to claim victory in virtue of it. It is the request that the powerful should refrain from taking liberties with the weak because they are afraid to take liberties with the powerful. That is what Libertarians have in mind when they speak of conduct which "should" be "non-invasive," not minding that it is scarcely possible to live a day in a community of two without being "invasive." We are one another's daily food. We take what we can get of what we want. We can be kept out of "territory" but not because we have any compunction about invading. Where the limiting line falls is decided in the event, turning on the will, whim and power of those who are devoured and devourers at one and the same time. Life is feasting and conflict: that is its zest. The cry for peace is the weariness of those who are too faint-hearted to live.

So Liberty remains the foible of the poor in spirit, who monopolise most of the virtues. The plain man (a rarer person alas! than is imagined) does not trouble to stretch the irregular canvas of his life to fit into the framework of the moralists' concepts. When Liberty whispers "Do not be so unbrotherly, so rude, so wicked as even to desire to govern," it is in a deaf ear, and it is this plain person whom Democracy's other companion, the State, must deal with.



The State is the National Repository for Firearms and Batons Company Ltd. It is owned, directed and exploited by State's men whose main qualification is to preserve the State's charter granted to it by the people, the chief terms of which are: The State cannot be dissolved; it can do no injury sufficiently serious to justify retaliation or attack; it can get as much money as it thinks safe out of the people; and use it to defend such "interests" as it seems "good" to the State's men to make an alliance with. The charter was no doubt granted when the "people" were being put by dexterous directors of the State under the hypnotic influence of "law and order"; and in this state of trance they have been lying—in the main—ever since. Occasionally there seems to be a hint that common intelligence might return to the people when they will waken up: whereupon a "great" statesman will arise and with a few skilful passes of the hand bring them back under the influence of "law and order"—other people's law and order: he will pacify the unrest.

It is the existence of this chartered state which makes "democracy" into a bludgeoning menace. It is the existence of the State which makes the rapid increase of "democratic" law a danger where French leave would be a sport. The difference between the two is the difference between the lists in a tournament and a slaughter-house. To empower a state after the fashion of a modern "civilised" state, and then leave it free to ally itself with interests already powerful is not merely for the lamb to lift its neck to the blade: it is to fashion the knife and drop it ostentatiously at the butcher's feet. A modern "poor" citizen appears so unmitigatedly a fool in his attitude towards the "state" that he suggests he is not merely a fool but is a knave in addition. One of an awestruck crowd of toilers, who when they are not licking their wounds in gaol for not minding their manners, are performing forced labour to feed and fatten—their governors, he fashions elaborated weapons of offence in quantities and allows them to be handed over—to those who dare govern: use them, to wit. They dream of heaven, toil, starve and are penalised: then lisp of liberty. All the same, they seem able to stand it. If these things have a lesson to teach, the meek at any rate have not learnt it.

However, the "flux of things" is in no way concerned to "teach." It defines itself more often than not before our intelligence can claim to have deserved it, and the modern democratic state is making its nature very clear indeed. Already it begins to look like the effigy of a stout and stupid old lady, twitching and lurching as though badly taken with hysteria and St. Vitus' dance. Without any organic living principle in itself it is at the mercy of every interest which cares to tweak at it. It is part of the jargon of "democracy" that the "state" is run in the interests of all: that before it, all interests are "equal," and though obviously they are not, every "interest" is quite ready to make what little it can out of the possibility. We all pay the piper so we all call a tune, and the chorus which results becomes so mixed in the long run that skilled "readers" are unable to decipher the score. The multiplicity of

interests "protected" defeats its own ends. The very swelling in the volume prevents the guarantee of state protection from proving effective. A state which protects too many interests becomes like an army which fights on both sides: no use to either, and no credit to itself, and the falling into discredit of the "State" is tantamount to the change of statutory law into French leave; individual will and whim.

Moreover, nature will out, life is too short to spend overmuch attention on an institution which will serve a "statesman's" immediate purposes more if he practises a certain fine carelessness. Even successful politicians can have so much straightforward honesty in their natures as to be unmoved by the fierce necessity to practise hypocrisy which the mock-heroic pose of the "State" demands. They cannot be diverted from their genuine interests: so we get a defalcating "reform" governor, the achievements of Tammany Hall, a Chancellor who accepts tips from the Stock Exchange, and a speculating Lord Chief Justice. It gives one a warmer respect for one's kind, but it is the death-knell of the State. To be sure the State dies piecemeal: for the spectators a tedious way of dying. To die—for the State—is to be found out: for its mouthpieces and component parts, individuals all, so to act as to be understood. The "noble democrats" who stand for "clean government" are wretched spoil-sports. They point to the parts from which the cover has slipped and say: it is corrupt: it must be washed: we are the men to do it. Except that they are serious, they are like the funny man in the pantomime who requests the plain-visaged female to take off her mask. They imagine that with Mr. Hilaire Belloc for instance as Prime Minister, we should feel happier in our insides. One would just as lief have Sidney Webb or Herbert Samuel, or Mr. Asquith. For choice, it would fall out to be the kind which would exist between Mrs. Webb sending a blue paper ordering us to take our food in lozenge form and demanding statistics how many times a day we washed: and Mr. Chesterton hesitating before granting us a dog-licence uncertain whether our secret imaginings were such as could be described as sound and British, such as the virgin Mary could whole-heartedly endorse. Of the two most people would prefer to swallow the Webb lozenge.

The growth of an interest in *clean* government would be the overcasting of a brightening sky. The will to govern is beginning to reveal itself as the inborn ineradicable force; and welcome or unwelcome is the form in which power inevitably makes itself manifest. Its trappings slip from it and it is seen stark for what it is. Of its ephemeral attendants, "Liberty" and the "State," Liberty is feeble and faded and the hypnotic passes upon which the State depends for its privileged position as failing to work. Respect is gone from it, and without it democracy becomes individual caprice: the first and final basis of the will to govern. When all these veils are being rent what unsportiveness to reintroduce confusion as *clean* government! A mystery-play where life offers high drama!

## VIEWS AND COMMENTS.

There is a game children formerly used to play which was a sort of Black Magic adapted for the nursery. The juvenile mystificator gathers his audience—of babes—and proceeds something like this: "Think of a number, double it, halve it, add—say—nine, subtract five, take away the number first thought of" and the clairvoyant triumphantly announces the accurate result—four. It was Mr. Steven Byington's\* way of treating the relationship of men to things which dug from our memory this

forgotten infantile amusement. His elaborate, meticulously careful arguments—"notably cautious" as he himself would say—on human affairs seem to us to be shaped precisely on this plan. He sets out to deal with men and things and from the discussion he abstracts—men. He accuses us of dealing with abstractions: and we do make it our business to deal with an abstraction which Mr. Byington has committed. He has abstracted from his discussion on men and things—men. From a situation which turns on human temper, he abstracts the temper. The difficulties arising out of the inequalities of human capacity he turns into a question of mathematics, as in the matter of interest.

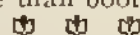
\* See Correspondence: THE NEW FREEWOMAN, December 15th.



The solemn disputations concerning interest, labour and capital could not exist were not their existence protected by this sort of unconscious verbal trick: the practice of which is not limited to Mr. Byington but is in quite general use. On the face of it, it is left to be presumed that the discussion is on human affairs: then immediately the discussion is cut off from all things human. The incalculable human temper is accepted as given—a stable quantity. The fact that it varies, grows, and springs up apparently out of nothing on impulse: all that is ignored. It is indicated by a fixed number or a definite quantity: and it is neither, and an elaborate pile of argument is built up on these false fixed quantities, whose accuracy can be judged as Mr. Byington says of calculations as to the accuracy of the principle of interest, "like any other mathematical problem." If the "worker" forgets the rôle assigned to him and behaves like a human being instead of a mathematical quantity and hits someone—or goes on strike, the discussionists "revise their estimates"—there has been a "slight inaccuracy:" then results will be "valuable" when they get the "given quantities" more precisely! It is a process calculated to make one feel very tired.



It is mainly due to those persons of splendid loquacity but of small sense, the political economists, that we have these absurd static concepts to which has been accorded the absolute quality of real entities—Labour, Capital, Interest, with their initial capitals and fictitious problems. Relative in themselves, their so-called problems are the old human problems which make the drama of life—initiative and shiftlessness, audacity and timidity. The economists whose bias and sympathy is towards initiative and audacity would reduce shiftlessness and timidity to a system: make it permanent and rigid like a mathematical sequence, the better to be worked upon. Those whose leanings are towards the timid and shiftless would make audacity and wilfulness into an intolerable crime. So the "problems" for the discussionists vacillate between the oracles of a pseudoscience and the impassioned outbursts of melodrama. It is not a question whether discussionists are talking of concrete things while we speak of abstract; nor whether we have a leaning for the *dynamic* in things while they like static and dynamic mixed. It is a question, in our opinion, whether writers on these subjects know what they are talking about at all. Persons who talked of lightning as though it were cotton-wool we should say didn't: and persons who speak of the interrelations of individuals in terms applicable to the fixed quantities of mathematics we should say likewise did not. "Labour unrest" (another piece of slang on its way to become a settled idea) is a matter of temper: not of social arrangement. The poor will cease to be poor when they refuse to be: the down-trodden will disappear when they decide to stand up: the hungry will have bread when they take it. What will happen after is a matter for chance and circumstance, but the single audacity even, will have served its moment, and its effects will not easily be obliterated. One thing is certain: that in the event of the Dublin strikers helping themselves to bread (which is the action Mr. Byington criticises) so many consequences would have defined themselves in Dublin that the situation which ultimately would have to be considered by merchants with grain to sell in Chicago, would be very different from that of starving-men supplying themselves with food merely. The difference would represent that which exists between life and mathematics. The second can be calculated and foretold: the first is to be taken in faith, and the event, however it befalls, to be met with spirit—the most concrete thing we know, as Mr. Byington will allow: more concrete than boots or statistics.



How subtly human temper has been undermined

by accepting concepts as realities is made clear by the manner in which the discussionists have dealt with a matter like "interest." As Mr. Byington himself uses "interest" as his illustration he will be ready to accept it in illustration of ours.

Bastiat, Henry George and Mr. Byington think interest "right," and it would be a rash person who would say it was "wrong," for it is as wrong as it is right, as right as it is wrong: wrong and right having no meaning save in the sense of accuracy, and accuracy applied to the "principle" of interest is pointless. The man who can extort interest is smart or fortunate; the man who has to pay it is unlucky or an inferior. It makes no difference when borrowing at an interest is erected into a system so that the exertions of the labouring world are set in motion financed with interest-paying money: the character of the operation is not changed. The workers, stupid and heavy, are without gumption and the "capitalist" is smart enough to know it, and makes use of them for his own benefit. Right and wrong have no relation to either side. As long as the procedure can be put through it is "right": when it can be so no longer, both parties will naïvely come to the conclusion that it is wrong. We will not bore our readers with the solemn, meticulously scrupulous pyramid of proof which Bastiat and Henry George pile up to attest the righteousness of "interest." It will be enough to quote their more salient points:

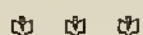
"One carpenter, James, at the expense of ten days' labour, makes himself a plane, which will last in use for 290 of the 300 working days of the year. William, another carpenter, proposes to borrow the plane for a year, offering to give back at the end of that time, when the plane will be worn out, a new plane equally as good. James objects to lending the plane on these terms, urging that if he merely gets back a plane he will have nothing to compensate him for the loss of the advantage which the use of the plane during the year would give him. William, admitting this, agrees not merely to return a plane, but, in addition, to give James a new plank. The agreement is carried out to mutual satisfaction. The plane is used up during the year, but at the end of the year, James receives as good a one, and a plank in addition. He lends the new plane again and again, until finally it passes into the hands of his son, 'who still continues to lend it,' receiving a plank each time. This plank, which represents interest, is said to be a natural and equitable remuneration, as by giving it in return for the use of the plane, William 'obtains the power which exists in the tool to increase the productiveness of labour,' and is no worse off than he would have been had he not borrowed the plane; while James obtains no more than he would have had if he had retained and used the plane instead of lending it."

Oh weary William! Bastiat thinks the "rightfulness" of his action needs explaining and he explains it in the grand manner. We think William best explains himself! Not so Henry George. He works up William's propensity for borrowing planes and giving planks exceedingly well, and finds that irrepressible plank-giving arises not from "the power which exists in tools to increase the productiveness of labour" as per the weighty conclusion of Bastiat, but from "the power of increase which the reproductive forces of nature give to *capital*." "Interest" is not an arbitrary, but a natural thing: . . . the result . . . of laws of the universe which underlie Society. It is therefore just." (No less!)

"If I plant and care for a tree until it comes to maturity, I receive, in its fruit, interest upon the capital I have thus accumulated—that is, the labour I have expended. If I raise a cow, the milk which



she yields me morning and evening is not merely the reward of the labour then exerted; but interest upon the capital which my labour, expended in raising her, has accumulated in the cow."



Accumulated in the cow! Milk! Misdirected nourishment of offspring the "interest"-taker has probably already come to the conclusion it is "right" to assimilate as veal. How naturally the constant repetition of a trick played on a slow-tempered beast has established itself! It is illustrative of a "law of the universe" even—therefore just. This really satisfyingly clever trick has been repeated so often that the victim appears to be as convinced of its "right"-ness as we who play it. What is the bovine "look" expressive of save the inner assent to the miscarrying process—to the proposition "Born to fill the milk-pail: born to be milked." And the true "worker" expression—if one notices it—is a replica of the bovine one. It says, "Born to be worked; born to make planks; born to be financed; born to be organised, domesticated, fed, stalled, stimulated to work unduly until working is a necessity: a seeker of work searching for the hand that will drain away the stimulated working energy. There is no mistaking the serving expression: dumb with its craving for the treatment which will enable it to offer of its best.

But let us not malign the born "worker" nor yet the cow. Cows to be sure are little sensitive even to touch, little resentful of "handling" as would be a thoroughbred mare, a doe, a tigress with cubs; but even among cows there can be "unrest."

There was a cow—of authenticated tradition—who went definitely into revolt, struck for better conditions, demanded—like the workers—some of the "better" things of life. She was unmistakably better-class and yearned for the wider culture: she had the æsthetic sense. She blankly refused to give up her milk—the accumulated interest—unless there was music during the draining process: not *any* music: one song and one singer. Only for "How beautiful upon the mountains" was she prepared to negotiate. (What would you think of that, Mr. Murphy?) She was successful and twice a day the melody was forthcoming, and the "interest" poured forth. We knew the singer, but not alas! that very superior cow: she had already been translated to a higher sphere, but as Mr. Byington, who, we gather, has a respect for English trade unionism, will be glad to know, has since returned to Great Britain as a spirit specially dedicated to the task of inspiring the words and actions of Trade Union Leaders; a sphere of usefulness for which she is peculiarly fitted, having but so recently passed through the soul-stress of a domesticated worker's agitation. With psychic intuitiveness she feels what her fellow-servers on the human plane need.

It is worth while noting for the benefit of those who are interested in the curious in human nature that the soul of this cow actively engaged in its insorational duties has been photographed. At the recent conference of delegates in the Memorial Hall to consider the Dublin strike, at the outset of the proceedings a man with a camera saw the soul of the aforesaid cow descending upon the leaders who adorned the platform. They were just about to break forth into the anthem "How beautiful upon the mountains," their faces already wearing the expression of contented bliss, when the man with the camera snapped them, and produced a picture which should last not for a day but for all time. Should our American friends doubt, this masterpiece may be seen in an issue of the "Daily News" of that date or the following. The stranger seen sitting in the rear of the picture biting his finger-nails and ill at ease in this barn-yard is Mr. Larkin. He looks a wild man out of place among these happy domesti-

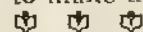
cated brethren. And so he was, he having a tale to tell—could he but have found the words for it—which was other than that of those who seek to make servitude comfortable.



Mr. Larkin is supposed to have been discredited by this gathering of Trade Union delegates. It is a great mistake in our opinion. The congress was the redeeming stroke of luck which enabled him to cancel out the brotherly-love slush of his missionary journey. In his great meetings he tried to convert audiences which while not having a fraction of his spirit had the phrases which could have voiced it far handier, and he talked down to what he considered his audiences' level; and he placed it a little too low. At the congress he was on the defensive and had to show the real quality: a fact for which those who do not care to see vital power smothered by the sheer mass of the stupid cannot be too grateful.



The recent strikes show signs of breaking up—failures rather more than less. And failures, we ask Mr. Byington to allow, because the "Strike" has been erected into an idea instead of being kept in its proper place as the name of a simple action of a negative kind. A "strike" connotes nothing beyond stopping work. Workmen do it regularly every night, only then, not being lured away from common sense by conceptual high-falutin-ness, they call it unceremoniously "knocking-off." They do not speak of that, in awed tones or debate its "rightness" and "wrongness," or talk of "conducting" it in a manner which is "mature" and representative of the "survival of the fittest." It is the idealisation of a simple act which in the "strike" makes men talk and act as though they were bewitched. "To conduct a strike"! One might as well "conduct" a sleep or a pause. It is not the "strike" which the strikers' opponents are at all likely to fear. It is its termination by definite action. It is *inaction* which has killed the recent "strike" efforts. What form the requisite definite action should take the strikers must judge for themselves. They know best what they stand in need of to make their defiance effectual.



The suggestion that the present Government imprisoned Larkin and then released him because they were *afraid* of him, while they allowed Sir Edward Carson to remain at large because they were totally unconcerned regarding him, is too grotesque to warrant any comment beyond the mere statement that the correct interpretation is precisely the opposite. It is depressing to think that sensible people give so acquiescent an ear to interpretations of news issued by a commercialised press. Its news may be tolerably accurate, but its opinions are discredited in advance. In connection, however, Mr. Byington might note an item of news: although for months arms have been imported into Ulster to such an extent that now the gentlemanly "rebels" are amply supplied, the proclamation prohibiting the importation of firearms into Ireland was not issued until the "Citizen Army" in Dublin took to daily drilling. It shows at least that the Government understands that the Dublin ragamuffins *might* be dangerous—under certain conditions. "Government" is as sensitive as a barometer to the sort of pressure which is capable of affecting itself.

Mr. Byington on "ideas" we regretfully leave until a later issue, as also our hoary wrangle with Mr. Tucker concerning Proudhon's "style."



At a meeting of shareholders of THE NEW FREEWOMAN LTD. called to discuss the advisability of changing the title of "The New Freewoman" to "The Egoist" held at Oakley House, Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C., on Dec. 23rd, a unanimous vote was given in favour of the change. From this issue on, "The New Freewoman" will be referred to as THE EGOIST.



## France To-Day : A Group of Thinkers.

WHEN a new star appears in the celestial firmament its brilliance arrives unheralded.

Though the Lords of Light have spent upon its being a million years of preparation, though the universe has laboured to the end of flashing its starriness upon our eyes at the moment fixed, of these preparations, of this gigantic focus, we can have no prevision. But when human minds are straining the universal currents for particles of thought and are labouring agglomeratively to forge a master idea, all the flames of their forge-fires cannot be so hidden. Those whose vision is most ranging will have been attracted by a spark; will have perceived mistily the toiling figures and have recognized them even across great spaces of the mental universe. When the new sun appears it will thus have been not inaccurately foreseen. So it is now. For behold, there is a new star in the constellation France, and its clearest rays are passing everywhere in the form of a book.

For two decades or more *La France*, cynic and scintillant by tradition, has been restless of her cynicism and disgusted with her brilliance. The ebb of belief has been reached and the floodtide of idealism runs strongly. *A bas le matérialisme* is the cry. Though this resurgent longing be not confined to France, it is France that has suffered most from two generations of "scientists," of scoffers and of Zolas. "To-day France is mayhap the country of the world where preoccupation with the spiritual life is disturbing individual consciences most profoundly." Conflicting politics—monarchical reaction, nationalism, syndicalism, socialism—make of journalistic bulletins a chaos. The old science of Huxley, Renan, Edgar Quinet and Haeckel is an object of quiet mirth to lads of the Latin Quarter whose first beard is not yet dark upon their cheeks. Idealists and reformers have the floor. There are the æsthetic anarchists, who are working for the spiritual regeneration of their nation by means of Walt Whitman and Nietzsche, art expression and individualism. There is M. Marc Sangnier with his "*Jeune République*," who pursue ardently and mystically the dream of a democratic renaissance founded upon the Catholic church; The Independent Republicans, with M. Paul Hyacinthe Loyson and his newspaper, "*Les Droits de l'Homme*," for fulcrum; then, as a stand-off to these, here are M. Gaston Riou and his "*Jeune France*," grouped about their review, "*Foi et Vie*," who are determined to recapture the old dream of the philosopher Renouvier, the spiritualizing of France by means of Protestantism. It is to the Protestants that we owe the book whose publication, in an atmosphere so surcharged with indetermined longing, can be significant of so much.

For the last six years the directors of "*Foi et Vie*" have held a series of conferences. The lecturers have been broadly chosen from divers schools of philosophy and religion. "The connecting link between them," says Paul Doumergue, editor of the review, "is very great preoccupation with all moral and religious problems. . . . They are happy to be assembled for the work—a work that consists of laying firmly the foundations of spiritual life." This year the subject chosen was a discussion of the state of materialism in French science and art, and an examination of its philosophic basis. The greatest savants were not too deeply occupied elsewhere to

lend their assistance. At the conclusion the series of seven lectures, including in addition a discourse given by M. Riou at Bordeaux, were united and published as "*Present-day Materialism*"\* ("*Le Matérialisme Actuel*, Bibliothèque de philosophie scientifique."

### I.

In a paper bearing the sententious title, "The Soul and The Body," M. Henri Bergson gives a new form to his psychological idealism (first expressed in "*Matière et Mémoire*," 1896), namely, that neither psychology nor old-line philosophy can offer a decent justification for belief in the materialism they have taught. M. Bergson's argument is like his thought, tempered and flexible as a Damascene blade, and like it, capable of dividing at a blow a fluttering silk scarf of an objection, or the clumsy mace of some more brutal opponent.

Consider first, he asks, the evidence of common sense. Each of us finds himself mind and body. Now *in appearance at least*, "by the side of our body, confined to the present moment in time and limited to the place it occupies in space . . . we notice something which extends much farther than the body into space (our sense perception) and which endures through time (by means of memory); something which demands or imposes on the body movements unforeseen and free . . . this is the 'me,' it is the mind, the mind being precisely a force which can draw from itself more than it contained, render back more than it receives, give up more than it has."

At this point materialism objects. Consciousness, it affirms, imagines it can govern movements of which it is really the mechanical result. Consciousness "is like the luminous mark that follows and traces the movement of a scratched match." "The truth is," say the materialistic psychologists, "that if we could see through the skull all that passes in a brain that is working, if we might, to observe its interior, dispose of instruments strong enough to assist at the dance of the atoms, and if we possessed a table of correspondences between the cerebral and the mental, we should know as well as the pretended 'soul' all that it thinks, feels and wills."

This, replies Bergson, you can never prove. It does not fall under immediate observation. Though it be, as you say, opposed to the law of the conservation of energy that the mind be in any sense truly creative, this law, like all physical laws, is only the summing up of observations made upon physical phenomena. What you do is to assume that the laws which hold for the physical world apply equally well to the mental. But this is the point to be proved. As a matter of fact, from observations made upon the nervous system in general, one is driven "to the conclusion that the constant contrivance of consciousness . . . is to convert physical determinism to its own ends. . . . All that observation, experiment, and in consequence, science, permit us to affirm, is the existence of a certain *relation* between the brain and consciousness."

There is no reason to reproach the scientists; they did the best they could. "But that such or such a one of them comes and tells us that experimentation reveals a rigorous and complete parallelism between the cerebral and mental lives, ah no! we shall stop him and reply: you savants can very well maintain this thesis, as the metaphysician maintains it. . . . But . . . you give back to us simply what we loaned you. We know the doctrine that you bring: it is a product of our workshops; it is we, philosophers, who manufactured it; and it is old, very old merchandise. . . . Give it for what it is, and do not go passing it for a result of science."

BOOKS on all subjects, Secondhand, at Half-Prices. New, 25 per cent. Discount. Catalogue 761 free. State Wants, Books Bought.—FOYLE, 121, Charing Cross Road, London.

\* "*Present-Day Materialism*" ("*Le Matérialisme Actuel*, Bibliothèque de philosophie scientifique," E. Flammarion. Paris. 1913).



From this point the distinguished philosopher expounds his own idea of the mental-physical relation following, in the main, his former development of the topic. By an examination of the psychology of language he arrives at the conclusion: thought is always turned toward action. "The brain is an *organe-de-pantomime*, and of pantomime alone. Its rôle is to mime the life of the mind, and to mime also the exterior situation to which the mind must adapt itself . . . (It) is the organ of attention to life."

Then by another brief examination of the facts of asphasia, he proves that the *memory*, a faculty which melts so gently into present consciousness that we cannot say where the one ends and the other begins, *is not in the brain*. "I shall, however, accept the idea of a container wherein memories are lodged, and I shall say quite candidly that they are in the mind." The brain serves as an "intermediary mechanism" by which our mind is kept "concentrated on the act to be accomplished." "The mind overflows the brain on all sides, and cerebral activity corresponds only to the least part of the mind."

How does this affect the problem of materialism? What may be said of birth and death and personal immortality? Though indisposed to dogmatize, Mr. Bergson assures us that his choice has already been made between a narrow rationalism that condemns us, by its insistence on absolutes, to the purely possible, and a looser, more human method which "operates upon a ground where probability is capable of infinite growth."

In so terminating his discourse, the great Frenchman announces his position more simply and definitely than it has ever before appeared in writing. The vigour and fertility of his most casual ideas are nothing less than marvellous. In passing he offers a theory of style (*Mat. Act. p. 29*) dazzling in its possibilities. He should know about style. Says one writer (\*) by no means extreme in his admiration for the philosophy itself: "Bergson's style has been the object of an almost extravagantly admiring comment; and there is no doubt that even when analyzed in the driest light it appears as the most wonderful vehicle through which philosophic thought has ever found speech." By his brilliant illustrations of difficult points he has excited world comment. But here (pp. 43-44) is the most marvellous yet uttered. With it he comes nearer than he has ever come before to expressing his answer to the enigma, what is life.

"Let us suppose," he says, "that my lecture has been going on for years, from the time when my consciousness first awakened, that it goes on in a single sentence and that my consciousness be enough detached from the future, sufficiently unconcerned with action, to be able to employ itself exclusively to embrace the entire meaning of the sentence. I then should no longer seek an explanation for the integral conservation of this entire past. . . . Now, I believe that our complete psychological existence is something like this single sentence that was begun at the first awakening of consciousness, a sentence strewn with commas but in no place cut by a period."

## II.

To the mathematical mind of the late Henri Poincaré (*New Conceptions of Matter*) there is no such thing as a problem of materialism. Or if there be, science can never utter the last word toward its solution. Science will always be by definition imperfect. Whoever says science, says duality between the mind that knows and the object known; and so long as this duality subsists, so long as mind distinguishes itself from its object, it can never know the latter perfectly because it will never see but the exterior. Intellect cannot transcend itself in order to

conduct investigations upon its own person. Although each new scientific discovery is a success for determinism, there will always remain a region unknown. In this region will be found human liberty, and from this place of vantage the mind will direct all the rest.

In its own way, however, physical science tends to divide itself into two more or less deterministic camps—that of the extreme atomists, whose definitive conclusions respond to the human need *to understand*, and that of the others, the continuum-ists, who cannot believe in a final division of units and who therefore respond to that other need of men, *to see*.

Between the two "ultimate reality" has been cuffed about, its atoms split into electrons, and finally denied altogether; since, according to some, atoms of matter are only holes in the ether. "As these holes cannot be displaced without deranging the ether which surrounds them, it takes an effort to displace them, and they appeared endowed with an inertia that belongs, in reality, to the ether." Not only men but bricks and porcupines are so many bubbles.

Thus we go, tripping lightly among the latest conclusions of the physical sciences, juggling with Planck's theory of the *quanta*, according to which, as William James suggested some years since, time and space are given only in jumps, and human history is a matter of drops and atoms.

Materialism? Ah, we settled that matter at the very beginning, messieurs.

## III.

The biologist, M. Jean Friedel (*Materialism and the Biological Sciences*) is philosophically a near relative of M. Bergson. Biology, he insists, cannot impose a particular outlook upon us, since it is always possible to explain a series of facts by at least two theories. Moreover, biology is both confined to the earth (unlike the physical sciences) and, to an overwhelming degree, to modern times.

But M. Friedel bases his faith in the ultimate spirituality of life, not on these slight points, but on the evidence of purpose, of which the fitness of all the beings in the botanico-zoological hierarchy of organisms offer evidence. "Life," he says, "is both transformation and permanence: transformation in virtue of the flood of matter incessantly renewed in the body's mould; permanence, in virtue of the mould itself, which develops according to its own law, conforming to a mysterious plan, even when the matter which realizes this plan is completely renewed." Back of life lies the *élan vital*. Farther than this M. Friedel does not need (or cannot?) go.

His is the weakest essay in the volume under consideration.

## IV.

Economists are strange fellows. After proclaiming for the last forty or fifty years the independence of economics of morality, here is M. Charles Gide of the Faculty of Law of the University of Paris gone further than the moralists have dreamed. He asks (*Materialism and Political Economy*) for a new kind of value, based on neither the brute natural production of the physioerats nor naked labour. "Desire, that is the unique cause of value."

Moreover, since that which is most important in determining desire is belief in the powers of anything to give satisfaction, the control of desirability comes under human influence, for "the future will be made of what we most believe in." If we have, as at present, our profoundest faith in money, in the future we can have only a money-ridden commonwealth. It behoves us, then, to let ethics enter upon the scene at once. With a system of ethical values predominant as, tradition runs, it ruled the early Roman republic, exploitation and the accumulation of too vast quantities of wealth will cease to be, since they are contrary to all known moralities.

\*"Eucken and Bergson." E. Hermann. (J. Clark & Co. London, 1913.)



This "transvaluation of all values," though not a Nietzschean project, namely, the spiritualization of desire, must come about chiefly through the work of the artist. Christ condemned avarice as the worst of sins, and avarice at that time meant simple attachment to property. In following the man of Galilee, M. Gide but echoes A. S. Johnson, the American, who expressed his own opinion as follows: "The ultimate need of the new industrialism is more artists and poets. . . . When these have done their work . . . a revolution will have been accomplished: a revolution in ideals and in values."

## V.

MM. François de Witt-Guizot, Gaston Riou and Firman Roz in turn trace the course of evolution in French literature during the last two decades; the first in literature properly speaking, the second, the colour of thought of the writers, critics and philosophers themselves (a possibility in France where at all times the solidarity of artists and thinkers is virtually complete); and M. Roz the progress of the very unliterary French theatre of the last half century.

Materialism, all admit, has been and remains the curse of French letters. Born in France in the XVIII. century from the "philosophes" and the astounding Didérot, lurking unperceived under the huge enthusiasm of the giants of French Romanticism, colouring the realism of Flaubert and the cold externality of the Parnassians, materialism received its best treatment at the hands of the Naturalists, Zola and the De Goncourts. It was an age of sceptics. In consequence, after Taine had taken the old formula of Hegel, forgotten in the country where it arose, "whatever is has a right to be," and embroidered it with his master imagination; when Renan was preaching futility eternal and an empty stoicism whose sole passion was to *know*—it was easy for Zola to defend his thesis, "to study man as he is—no longer the metaphysical man but the physiological man. . . . Thought is a product of the whole body." The error of Naturalism was that arbitrarily "it cut man in two and rejected half." Thus its products lack any touch of spirit—"no soul, no inner life, hence no truth," exclaims M. de Witt-Guizot. Sainte-Beuve remarked ironically that "truth is not entirely and necessarily on the side of evil, on the side of human folly and perversity."

Nevertheless, materialism persisted in spite of Balzac and Dumas Fils. And though its strongest child, Naturalism, succumbed to the blows of the muscular trio, Ferdinand Brunetière, Melchior de Vogué and Paul Bourget, materialism still persists in France under the cover of a "sensualité exquise" and a "brutal theater." "Philosophic materialism in the XVIII. century, naturalistic materialism in the middle of the XIX. century, sensualistic and 'intellectualist' materialism at the opening of the XX. century"—such is the summary of the situation given by M. de Witt-Guizot. M. Roz is hardly more hopeful. "There is," he says, "in our contemporary theatre what might be called a social materialism."

Yet the dawn is breaking. Pascal has come into the veneration he has so long deserved. Though the outworn play of sensual intrigue continue to haunt the stage, the novelists and the poets are delving into deeper levels. M. Riou foresees a renaissance of Christian faith. This opinion is not shared by M. Roz, who declares flatly that the new "zeal has nothing to do with philosophical idealism or religious spirit." The point is that he finds a new zeal permeating France, and a new generation nourished on Maeterlinck, Walt Whitman and Emerson. Even the old scepticism of Anatole France and Pierre Loti seems strangely out of date. Maurice Barrès and Romain Rolland have the car of youth. Their message, their outlook, is no longer jaded and blasé; it is more knowing and more courageous.

## VI.

To-day the unhealthy vapours of materialism are dissolving fast. In consequence all France is perceiving with a sort of relieved horror just how near their nation has been running to the shoals of mental and material dissolution. Viewed in retrospect, the danger appears clear-cut. France has been stifling beneath the fog of its own emptiness. The spiritual air was void of oxygen. Having nothing fit to breathe, men inhaled what they found. This was the time of moral "decadence," when disease increased to a national menace and the theatrical billboards flamed with advertisements of plays "for people of sixteen years and over." Sensuality we have always with us. But having found no more profound interests, men and women gave themselves frankly to the *jouissance du corps*. Cynicism followed. Against what remains of these attitudes M. Charles Wagner, "Pastor Wagner," as he is called, writes the last of the papers under consideration.

The worst is past, he thinks, but much remains to be done. "Practical materialism is a depreciation of human values to the profit of the *thing*." The blight of the thing penetrated society's sub-soils thoroughly. In working quarters it lingers; it brings the death of joy, the death of sense for beauty, and forces its victims to fanatical negations.

As sensuality, materialism has led to the corrupting of French culture, to making Paris a city from which hypocrite strangers, drawn thither at the lure of its vice, may return to dub it the modern Babylon. It has done worse: it has ruined art, it has stamped a social system in which prostitution plays a most honourable rôle upon a nation formerly renowned for its refinement. In older times social marriage without love was the practice of a society of vested aristocrats, whose power and self-maintenance depended upon keeping an intact front. In a republic the general custom of so marrying blights the first and last flowers of love. It must be done away with.

These are the vital inferences to be drawn from M. Wagner's discourse. With it the lectures organized by "Foi et Vie," this riding to hounds of famous hunters with materialism for quarry, come to an end.

What matters is that the clergyman, Wagner, has found such vigorous supporters among men in other lines who do not profess Christianity. Is it the tenor of the coming age that is shown—an age that will witness the fusion of the idealistic cults?

I feel that a movement wherein are enlisted the best minds of France, who represent a culture so deep as hers, cannot be the mere vagabondage of a shooting star. It must be a more durable fire. There has been too much talk of the downfall of French prestige, of inherent Gallic viciousness and imminent decay. The French are not a nation of natural sceptics; they are among the most religious of peoples. Though for a time deprived of their faith by scientific progress, which made upon their more sensitive intellects a more conjuring impression, they are gradually returning to a sturdy idealism. Among young France to-day the most admired attitude toward life is one to which their ancestors first gave a name—*le bel sérieux*.

EDGAR A. MOWRER.

## The Cubist Room.

FUTURISM, one of the alternative terms for modern painting, was patented in Milan. It means the Present with the Past rigidly excluded, and flavoured strongly with H. G. Wells' dreams of the dance of monstrous and arrogant Machinery, to the frenzied clapping of men's hands. But futurism will never mean anything else, in painting, than the Art practised by the five or six



Italian painters grouped beneath Marinetti's influence. Gino Severini, the foremost of them, has for subject matter the night resorts of Paris. This, as subject matter, is obviously not of the future. For we all foresee in a century or so everybody being put to bed at 7 o'clock in the evening by a State Nurse. Therefore the Pan Pan at the Monaco will be, for Ginos of the Future, an archaistic experience.

Cubism means, chiefly, the art, superbly severe and so far morose, of those who have taken the genius of Cézanne as a starting point, and organised the character of the works he threw up in his indiscriminate and grand labour. It is the reconstruction of a simpler earth, left as choked and muddy fragments by him. Cubism includes much more than this, but the "cube" is implicit in that master's painting.

To be done with terms and tags, post impressionism is an insipid and pointless name invented by a journalist, which has been naturally ousted by the better word "Futurism" in public debate on modern art.

This room is chiefly composed of works by a group of painters, consisting of Frederick Etchells, Cuthbert Hamilton, Edward Wadsworth, C. R. W. Levinson, and the writer of this foreword. These painters are not accidentally associated here, but form a vertiginous but not exotic island, in the placid and respectable archipelago of English art. This formation is undeniably of volcanic matter, and even origin; for it appeared suddenly above the waves following certain seismic shakings beneath the surface. It is very closely-knit and admirably adapted to withstand the imperturbable Britannic breakers which roll pleasantly against its sides.

Beneath the Past and the Future the most sanguine would hardly expect a more different skeleton to exist than that respectively of ape and man. Man with an aeroplane is still merely a bad bird. But a man who passes his days amid the rigid lines of houses, a plague of cheap ornamentation, noisy street locomotion, the Bedlam of the press, will evidently possess a different habit of vision to a man living amongst the lines of a landscape. As to turning the back, most wise men, Egyptians, Chinese or what not, have remained where they found themselves, their appetite for life sufficient to reconcile them, and allow them to create significant things. Suicide is the obvious course for the dreamer, who is a man without an anchor of sufficient weight.

The work of this group of artists for the most part underlines such geometric bases and structure of life, and they would spend their energies rather in showing a different skeleton and abstraction than formerly could exist than a different degree of hairiness or dress. All revolutionary painting to-day has in common the rigid reflections of steel and stone in the spirit of the artist; that desire for stability as though a machine were being built to fly or kill with; an alienation from the traditional photographer's trade and realisation of the value of colour and form as such independently of what recognisable form it covers or encloses. People are invited, in short, to change entirely their idea of the painter's mission, and penetrate, deferentially, with him into a transposed universe as abstract as, though different from, the musicians.

I will not describe individually the works of my colleagues. In No. 165 of Edward D. Wadsworth; No. 161 of Cuthbert Hamilton; Nos. 169 and 181, of Etchells; No. 174 of Levinson, they are probably best represented.

Hung in this room as well are three drawings by Jacob Epstein, the only great sculptor at present working in England. He finds in the machinery of procreation a dynamo to work the deep atavism of his spirit. Symbolically strident above his work, or in the midst of it, is, like the Pathe cock, a new-born baby, with a mystic but puissant crow. His latest work opens up a region of great possibilities, and

new creation—David Bomberg's painting of a platform, announces a colourist's temperament, something between the cold blond of Severini's earlier paintings and Vallotton. The form and subject matter are academic but the structure of the criss-cross pattern new and extremely interesting.

WYNDHAM LEWIS.

## Ferrex on Petulance.

MY gracious, superior and I need scarcely say elder friend constantly remonstrates with me for the petulance of me and my generation. He says I cannot get Lord Howard de Walden to buy "The Times" and suppress it, or Lord Alfred Douglas to assassinate the most odious editor of a very odious monthly, or, in short, have any effect on superior circles unless I lay aside all petulance, and persuade my generation to do so.

"In short, the younger generation is ill-fed, and its petulance betrays its ill-feeding, and therefore no superior person will believe in the loftiness and unbiasedness of its ill-fed opinion." True it is that the younger generation is ill-fed and worse-mannered. No longer do kings in African cities array the aspiring writers in flowery-broidered robes, to observe the Kalends of Mahomet. No longer doth W. E. Henley from the lowlands of Scotland put forth an ægis of style above the head of the rising author. My elder and superior friend talks of three guineas a page as minimum wages, my younger and extremely superior friend talks of Paris where no one gets paid at all—and the annalists prate of the nineties.

In all this there is no high moral lesson. *Quis accurate loquitur, nisi qui vult putide loqui?* "Who speaketh elaborately but he that means to speak unsavourily?" as Florio has rendered it.

"A generation came down to London resolved to speak as they wrote." For all that disastrous decade men spoke with the balanced sentence. There was great awe in the world.

And then there came to London a generation that tries to write as it speaks—and these young men are termed petulant—a praise by faint condemnation?

Let us admit the defect. We cannot read Thomas Browne to develop a cadence, or rather if we did, or even do, the cadence escapes us when we become hot in composition.

We have attained to a weariness more highly energised than the weariness of the glorious nineties, or at least more obviously volcanic. We see on the one side the elaborate prose period and we see on the other some highly systematised smugness—as for instance "The Times," and when we try to treat one with the other, when we try to speak of, say, "The Times" with, say, the cadence of Urn Burial, we lose the connection. There is within us nothing to say beyond the Gallic "five letters," it is so with many things that have outworn their day. We feel that we have showed all possible moderation if we have been able to dilute our profane and emotional utterance into any sort of syntax at all.

We gaze, glance, or animadvert upon any one of a number of organs and institutions no one of which has ever, in any emergency, or upon any tide of impulse, been known to depart from its professional position of supporting the upper dog. We do not see through the eyes of romance nor of impressionism. These organisations do not represent a worthy stolidity. They no longer affect one as Lions in Trafalgar Square. They exist in the open. They ask for concessions of territory, or for concessions in intellectual territory. They criticise books with an elaborate pomposity of ignorance that no longer deceives any but rustics. And in the face of this are we in the



heat of our declining youth expected to stretch the one word *merde* over eighteen elaborate paragraphs? Are we expected to write of these things with such involved ambiguity that people with whom we dine later will not know that their relatives have been insulted? Are we to carry the courtesy of Urbino to the shambles?

You will say that we should preserve a lofty indifference—surely we have mentioned these things very seldom. We have gone our own gait—and they call that “neglecting life,” and “devitalising one’s writing.” There is some excuse, even for Monsieur Marinetti, not much—but a little.

\* \* \* \*

It is possible that England tolerates only two sorts of writers: the institution or the outlaw, and that being the case, a young writer would probably fare better in writing for “Modern Society” than in contributing to “The Spectator”—a serious writer I mean—one who had some hunger for immortality and some hope of meeting De Maupassant in the not too celestial paradise.

At any rate, let me draw to the end of my gentle homily, cautioning the “young writer” to seek out henceforth a not too honied suavity in dealing with “current questions,” for by this means alone shall he gain empery over the moderate minds of his elders.

FERREX.

### PORREX ON FERREX.

WE must really explain that Ferrex is a fine specimen, *pulcher ac fortissimus, sarcinis aptissimus*, but he fails to understand our passions. It may be that we as the youngest generation are truly well opinioned of our parts, that we write with truculence rather than with that air of triumph which designates and distinguishes those authors who are getting well on toward forty. For all that I am in unison with a certain distinguished papist who says that certain things do not matter. As for influencing the suet-like minds of our prosperous forerunners—why should we bother? These men will probably die in due season and we shall be left to insult above their tribe with a placid insouciance. Why should we bother to express ourselves at length and in flowing periods? Is it not cogent argument enough to say we see through you, you are a kettle of wind and transparent? Is it not enough to insure them that their tombstone will not endure a day beneath our hands?

This criticism by institutional method that Ferrex rails at is not really a force that matters. Saintsbury cannot possibly matter in 1911, he is as little alive as William of Orange.

As for petulance among the younger writers, I confess I do not much find it—save possibly in some weeklies.

They may say that we are lacking in deference for our elders, but if we consider these elders we see that in their youth they may have had causes for deference to Browning and Fitzgerald and Rossetti. Yet what have they left us?

The decade of vilanelle left us nothing and the hyper-æsthetes left us a fine large stench to grow up in. And as for the survivors: what have they to do with the deeds of our timorous laureate, or with the cult of the utterly innocuous, or with an academic committee which has made itself the laughing-stock of Europe by failing to elect Rabindranath Tagore?

Surely there was never a time when the English “elder generation as a whole” mattered less or had less claim to be taken seriously by “those on the threshold.”

PORREX.

## Books, Drawings, and Papers.

ANYONE who has read only “The Road to the Open” of Arthur Schnitzler will be a little puzzled to understand why he has been called the “Austrian de Maupassant.” “Bertha Garlan”<sup>\*</sup> rather explains this flattering *cognomen*. It is really written in accordance with the traditions of Flaubert and de Maupassant. No one will be so bold as to say that he has carried these traditions further or even excelled the two French masters who created them. He has simply applied their methods to German life, with the result that we have in “Bertha Garlan”—in its translated form—a novel as far above contemporary English work as Madame Bovary itself is above “The Road to the Open.” It is simple presentation, not impressionism, but clear unrhettorical presentation of events and psychology. Schnitzler neither raves nor becomes dull; he is never vulgar. The tone of the book is level and impersonal. He never “works up the emotion.” He does not sentimentalise. When he describes a set of circumstances in which people’s minds are highly emotionalised it is all done so calmly that you hardly realise at the moment that the writing is so intense. I do not mean that the sense of emotion is lacking; I mean that as the thing is presented you feel that Schnitzler is not trying to enlist your sympathies for or against his characters; he is content to give you their emotions without intruding his own, and the effect in the sum is immeasurably superior to the sentimental devices of popular authors.

I spoke of the resemblance of “Bertha Garlan” to “Madame Bovary”; indeed, one might say that the former is a book about Emma Bovary’s half-sister. For instance, in Madame Bovary after Emma has returned from her ride with Rodolphe she looks at herself in the mirror and wonders to see how beautiful she has become:—“Elle se répétait: ‘J’ai un amant! un amant!’ se délectant à cette idée comme à celle d’une autre puberté qui lui serait survenu. Elle allait donc posséder enfin ces joies de l’amour, cette fièvre du bonheur dont elle avait désespéré.” And in Bertha Garlan there is a somewhat similar incident after Bertha returns from Vienna where she has had an affair with her old lover. She meets a woman friend who appears to Bertha to exult in marital bliss and to pity her:—

“Bertha had an overwhelming desire to shriek in that person’s face;

‘I had a much better time than you think! I have been with an enchanting young man who is a thousand times more charming than your husband! And I understand how to enjoy life quite as well as you do! You have only a husband, but I have a lover!—a lover!—a lover!’”

Again it might be pointed out that the death of Frau Rupius has a resemblance to that of Madame Bovary, and that the effect of her death on Bertha is precisely like what one could imagine Madame Bovary’s death to have upon any woman friend of hers who happened to be in a condition similar to Bertha’s. Maybe that sounds a little obscure, but I think it is sound. Still, these things are mere details, far less important than the many scenes and characters which de Maupassant borrowed from his master. There is really only one error in the book, and that occupies seven lines and is debatable. I refer to the

<sup>\*</sup> “Bertha Garlan.” A Novel by Arthur Schnitzler, translated from the German by J. H. Wisdom and Marr Murray. (Max Goschen, Ltd. 4/6.)



passage at the end, where Schnitzler allows himself to moralise. "Bertha divined what an enormous wrong had been wrought against the world in that the longing for pleasure is placed in woman just as in man; and that with women that longing is a sin, demanding expiation, if the yearning for pleasure is not at the same time a yearning for motherhood." This from the Austrian de Maupassant! This in the twentieth century! This from a Germany overpopulated to the extent of—how many millions is it?—five, fifty? This at the end of a perfectly wonderful novel! How M. de Gourmont would smile.

Putting all this aside as minor, and somewhat carping, we have in Bertha Garlan a work of art, sufficient to assure everyone interested in literature that Austria has produced a writer who is not lost in the slimy marsh of Victorianism—I don't know what they call it in Austria, Naudauism I suppose. Schnitzler has observed the intelligence of French writers and he has taken his lessons from them without becoming an imitator. Bertha Garlan, taken as a whole, is just as Austrian as "L'Education Sentimentale" is French. And Schnitzler has in this book completely eliminated Tedescan sentimentality—except in the seven lines I have quoted. He has boiled the blubber out of Germany. He has written a work which is precise without being provincial, Austrian without being patriotic, typical without being abstract. I don't know what else is expected of an artist.

Mr. Stewart Caven's "Green Enigma" is a very different sort of book. Just exactly what he is aiming at is a little difficult to determine. He may have meant to mystify; he may have been ironic; or he may have been trying to tell a story in his own fashion. There are certain marked literary derivations to be noticed; perhaps one might define the book as a curious and not unsuccessful blending of Salambo, the Arabian Nights, Pater, Buddhism, Wilde, and Occultism. It sounds a most incongruous mixture, and yet is pleasing enough if one can free one's mind from the suspicion that Mr. Caven is trying some sort of a joke. And the really ironic ending to the book rather bears this out. On the other hand it is improbable that any man would waste so much energy and imagination upon writing a joke. The passages in the Green Enigma which are founded upon Salambo are really admirable; Mr. Caven has a real faculty for describing what he has never seen. He has contrived to imitate the gorgeous colour of Salambo, the rich fruity style of a leader writer, and the descriptions in the Arabian Nights with great *éclat*. The temple in Salambo is obviously the model for Mr. Caven's temple; I do not mean to say that there is any definite imitation, but the following passage is typical:—

"To the height of a man's shoulder the walls were clothed in a wainscot of rare, scented woods of a light colour, arranged in mosaics of involved geometrical design. Silver arms and chains held, at regular intervals along the cornices, six bird-shaped lamps of silver, from the beaks of which protruded unflinching bulbs of white light."

Now who is to say whether that is presented as the imaginative work of a devoted disciple or as an ironic parody? If it is parody it is exceptionally well done; if it is imitation it is written with so much imagination as to deserve applause.

I do not propose to illustrate with quotations all the prose-writers whom Mr. Bevan has studied and

reproduced in his book, but I will give one to show the kind of effect he gets by a subtle Pater-Wilde blending:—

"And there was, too, something in the pallor and delicacy of her hands and face, as well as a quality in the tone of her hair, that made her seem foreign to the daylight itself, so that in that shapely garden, where every leaf upon the cream and pale green shrubs and pippolas looked as if it had been newly washed and curled, as she tripped away over shorn turf that might have been laid on by the tender brush of a Japanese artist, even these fine objects were coarse and crude in comparison with her frail, exotic person." And elsewhere the phrases "imaginative intelligence" and "sanctuary swept and garnished" demonstrate—how shall we put it?—a too close study of a somewhat uneven master? I do not wish to decry Mr. Caven's productions in this direction; they are singularly clever; but it is necessary to point them out.

The plot of the book is far too complex to reproduce here even if such a barbarous thing were desirable. Yet without doing so it is quite impossible to indicate my reasons for judging the thing as ironic. There can be no doubt that Mr. Caven possesses a descriptive talent—however derived—quite unlike and superior to that of any other English prose writer that I know of. Wilde tried to do that sort of thing but failed; it is possible that there are budding Orientalists whose works are not yet famous, but I do not know anyone else who could prolong such writing through a whole novel without becoming stale or boresome. And the Green Enigma is interesting enough; it makes sufficient demands upon the intelligence of readers to put it for ever beyond the pale of a "great popular success," but it would not be surprising if the book became, in a mild way, a sort of cult in certain circles. My own particular crowd will "pooh-pooh" and "to-hell-with-it"; I am not so certain; it may come through, it may simply drop out. If it is a serious apprentice work, it is a fine effort; even as a finished product its curious originality, its strange blending of styles, its real literary qualities should commend it to the elect. It is not the highest praise to say that a book will live because it is a literary curiosity. It is damning it to speak of its promise. I suppose the real truth is that it is so good that one is absolutely unable to abuse it, and not quite good enough for one to praise it without reserve. Dash it all, here is a book worth a hundred Hewletts and Dorian Greys and tedious social plays and yet more tedious social novels. Did not Heine say of Byron, "I like this young man: he and I are equals. Shakespeare tires me with his superiority"—or something rather like that?

Let us all return to the precepts of the nineties and study art, not life, for the course of life is sluggish and unimpressive, the works of art are marvellous and incredible. Let us examine Mr. Wyndham Lewis' portfolio of drawings, illustrating, I believe, his moods after reading *Timon of Athens*.<sup>\*</sup> Opinion seems divided as to the merit of these productions. One youthful person assured me that Mr. Lewis' work was a "cacophony of sardine-tins"; a "distinguished novelist" remarked that the cover looked like a child's Christmas mechanical motor-car; and another "distinguished novelist" remarked in his usual, almost inaudible tones, "Of course, Wyndham Lewis is the most interesting painter going; if I hadn't my wife to consider I should just have him in to decorate the house." I myself have several of the drawings about my room, and though I do not know what they represent, and do not even know whether they mean

\*"The Green Enigma." By Stewart Caven. (Howard Latimer Ltd. 6/-.)

\*"Timon of Athens." A portfolio of drawings, by Wyndham Lewis. (Max Goschen.)



to represent anything, I get a great deal of pleasure from them. The drawing of Act IV. which looks rather like a lot of cinders thrown into a big black spider's web delights me; at night I sit opposite it, smoking my pipe, and all sorts of curious ideas come out of it and take shape and curl away, and I never get tired and the picture never gets dull. After all no one could sit and look at even Mona Lisa every night without getting bored; mere representation becomes insipid.

Mr. Lewis has an article in another page of THE EGOIST which will explain his views, or some of his views, much better than I can. When confronted with these drawings and asked for an opinion I feel like "that ridiculous journalism which usurps the judgment-seat when it should be apologising in the dock." Mr. Lewis is—I think there is no artistic insult in this—a Cubist. Most of us have seen his pictures at the Doré Galleries and have probably wondered what on earth they were, seeking for analogies like unimaginative poets. I decline to regard Mr. Lewis as an imbecile, or as deficient in eyesight. He has Picasso as a precedent, and his conversation is both amusing and intelligent. Heaven knows how he will develop, but all his developments will be interesting.

"Le Mercure de France" has some prose poems called "Stèles" by Victor Segalen. They are not Greek sepulchral inscriptions, but poems with curious titles like "Table de la Sagesse" and "Les Gens de Mani." They have a certain originality. It is somewhat flattering to notice that M. Davray in his article on the eternal (or infernal) Tagore has made use of one of Ezra Pound's articles which appeared in these columns. Incidentally M. Davray has perpetrated an excellent joke, by calling Tagore the "confrère hindou" of Mr. Pound. It should please all parties. Among other things the "Mercure" has two unpublished letters of Arthur Rimbaud, and an article on Stendhal's method of composition by Henry Debraye.

"La Flora" is edited by M. Lucien Rolmer. The cover is decorated with an engraving of Botticelli's Flora, and the inside is devoted to the service "des lettres et de l'art gracieux." A large portion of the review is devoted to poetry. The contributors to this number are MM. Gasquet, Galzy, Marie Delétang, Jean-Desthieux, Verane, and Lucien Rolmer.

RICHARD ALDINGTON.

## "The Horses of Diomedes."

By REMY DE GOURMONT.

(Translated by C. Sartoris.)

### XVIII.—THE JUGGLER.

Inimitable juggler, hail! . . . How artfully  
you cheat life!

Fanette was dying, submerged by love, in her great luxurious bed. Her feverish face with its crimson burning cheek-bones, its parched lips and sparkling eyes, showed the interior fire, the flame, devourer of life. She had bared her somewhat sunken bosom and her hands played slowly with pages torn from the tender book.

Diomedes knelt down, kissed the burning breast. A muffled but still gentle voice thanked him:

— Your lips are cool. Again! O Diomedes, it is you, you are here. I knew you would come, you. The others have forsaken me, all, all! But you, you could not forsake me because you are Diomedes. . . . O you . . . O thou! . . . To think I am going to die in your arms! I am very happy. . . . You and the Book!

And she drew to her lips, kissing them with an equal love, Diomedes' hand and the pages torn from the tender book.

— But you are pretty, little Nette, you smile, your eyes shine. . . . Give your arm. . . . Fever . . . much fever. . . . To lie covered up, with one's arms under the bedclothes, to think of nothing, to sleep. . . .

— Sleep. . . . It is so long since I have slept! But I await the immense sleep . . . Oh! how comfortable I shall be! Already I feel well. . . . You are there! Yes, he is there! Listen, they came this afternoon, the great ghosts with eyes of fire under their shrouds. . . . They wanted to take me away but I beseeched them. . . . I wanted to see you. . . . They will come back. Do not be afraid, Diomedes, they are not cruel. They are angels come to take souls and lead them towards the joy, out there. . . . Ah! how I suffer! My heart is burning like a red hot coal, it writhes, it screams, it bursts, it is ablaze! Put your hand to quench the flames. . . . Your hand is cool. . . . Oh! how I love you.

Diomedes let his hand stay long on the wasted bosom, though its burning was really that of a furnace; then, as Fanette had closed her eyes, soothed by the magnetism of his touch, he withdrew, to ask some questions of the servant who was crying in her kitchen.

Then he understood that in presence of grief and of death everything faded away, intelligence, social and moral differences, castes, virtue, all those chance clothes with which man covers his bare instinct.

This old woman who had never waited on Fanette but reluctantly, shocked in her pauper's morality by all the refinements of a sensual life, this homely slattern wept truly and her simple words protested.

— So pretty, so young and so good, Monsieur Diomedes! It is not just! You will tell me that she followed her fancies and that she is punished for her sins! Oh, Monsieur Diomedes, death all the same, is a very great punishment! I know that she went about always, quite naked, even here, before me, and I shook with shame. . . . That offends the good God that does. . . . No one has ever seen me quite naked, me, Monsieur Diomedes, but each one has his own ideas. . . . However I forgive all willingly. . . . The doctor has said it was the end. He said also: Ah! how many poor girls I have seen die just that way. He will come back at midnight. Here are the remedies. One is missing. I am going to fetch it. When she suffocates, we must make her drink some. Then she will die quietly, peacefully like a child dropping into sleep. That is what he says.

Diomedes came back into the room bearing the phials.

All these manœuvres seemed to him ugly. He would have wished so close to death, less medicine, more dignity, flowers, distant music, pale tapers. The idea of giving opium to a moribund met with his approval however. He liked that doctor, then, thinking of his own fortune, he considered himself happy at not having to fear the hospital, that prison of the sick, that laboratory where all flesh is vile, where each body opens as a commonplace bible before the curiosity of science.

Mournful parables read in the distended nerves and putrefying muscles! . . . So Fanette was going to die. . . . He experienced horror, pity, but little sorrow.



"Poor child! But how privileged she is. She is going to die, but in full happiness. Her eyes will have as a last vision, my serious face and the ray of a mute good-bye; her sinking hands will clutch at the hand of a friend; and, heavy from being filled with nothingness, her drooping head will rest on my brotherly shoulder. Ah! die in happiness, Fanette, since you must die and give me, dear little girl, the example of a smile, at the hour when a smile is perfect beauty. . . .

Diomedes scarcely heard, faint and slow, Fanette's voice.

— You are there?

He laid his hand on her hot brow.

— He is there. . . . I feel his hand on my brow. . . . His hand is cool. My forehead is bathed in fresh water. . . . Now I am doing my hair. . . . My comb has fallen. . . . Never mind. . . . Give me my white robe and my long veil. . . . Yes, Madame, it is my little Communicant.—She is so sweet — A little angel Madame — Ah! night has come — No, it is a cloud. . . . I don't know anything any more, I don't know. . . .

Diomedes, as soon as the voice had ceased, lost in the catching of her breath, turned slightly, for he thought he had heard steps on the carpet: It was so and the servant was saying:

— Monsieur Diomedes, I thought I was doing right. Returning from the chemists, I met him. He is here.

Diomedes turned round completely. A priest was there standing at the foot of the bed, his hat in his hand, like a visitor, rather indifferent, almost shy. That priest, met by chance. . . .

Diomedes hesitated, fearing the recitation of formulæ, a commonplace ministry, a harsh and perhaps raucous voice which would terrify the gentle sleeper. . . . But he mused:

"The liturgies must be accomplished:

Then:

"He is perhaps called by Fanette's desire."

And he trembled at the thought that this desire might have been unfulfilled, despised himself for not having read better in the obscure soul of his little dying friend.

Meanwhile the priest, feeling that his presence was not hostile, had knelt down. His head, in both hands, he prayed.

Diomedes thought his attitude beautiful. His cloak swung back, his somewhat long hair gave him the appearance of a great black angel, of a mysterious messenger of compassion and mercy. He lifted his head, his eyes full of tears.

Surprised, Diomedes asked in a whisper:

— You cry, Monsieur! You know her then?

— No, but every death touches my heart, answered the priest, looking at Diomedes with large, gentle, dimmed eyes. And this one seems to me so painfully pure. . . . I heard her delirious confession. . . . One does not die with that grace and that abandon in God when one has had, even for a day, an ugly soul.

— She has sinned, resumed Diomedes who thought he misunderstood. She was even by way of being, in the full measure of her nature, the sinner.

— I know it. The servant told me! What does it matter? The sin reveals itself in the consciousness of having sinned. In themselves, acts are but gestures: the soul is hardly responsible for the movements of the automaton. Alone, those have done wrong who have wished wrong. She obeyed the rhythm of life, could she break it? Strength is not given to all. To live according to one's nature, is to live according to God. . . .

Fanette, her eyes suddenly wide open and fixed, moved with a start. Her hands pushing away the

coverlets, rose towards her rebellious bosom which she clutched. A breath filled with mists passed through her open mouth.

Raising the pale head, its cheeks branded with fire, Diomedes let a few drops of the liquor of peace trickle through the lips. Then Fanette seemed to revive, her eyes turned gently towards the eyes of Diomedes. The sight of the priest caused her no dread; she lifted towards him her weary hand which dropped at once, exhausted—and already the eyes were closing, the head sinking. . . .

The priest laid his lips on the waxen hand. He seemed to wish to be blessed and absolved by this soul whose wings were beating.

The mist-like breath hurried, muffled and almost harsh; the muscles of the neck trembled; the priest murmured, whilst Diomedes held in his hands the thin fingers that moved like grasses going with the stream:

"Free thyself, poor soul, go towards mercy. Love holds out its arms to thee and Pity, its sister, kneels to smooth the path on which thy naked feet must tread.

Free thyself, poor Soul!

Suffer no more, candid creature, go towards mercy. May the vast white wings of Hope be the sails of thy craft, and may the good winds of heaven urge thee towards the shore!

Free thyself, poor Soul!

Rejoice, heart full of grace and go towards mercy. Freed from sin, purified from untruths, enter into the choir of angels and become the viola which repeats in melodies the thought of the Infinite.

Free thyself, dear Soul and having once entered into glory, deign to pray for us, miserable sinners. Amen."

At these last words, Fanette died, swept away by a great shudder.

The priest went out.

Diomedes remained alone whilst the servant sobbed, he mused. This peaceful death had moved him without his feeling real sorrow.

"If I had only heard of her death in a few weeks, I would scarcely have been troubled. Therefore did I not love Fanette! And yet? No, I loved her less cordially than did this poor servant by whom she was secretly despised. I loved her body, her hair, her voice, all that was Fanette, but herself? No. She was to me one of the moments and one of the forms of the race and I never asked of her anything but sensual communion. It was myself alone I loved, echoed by the vibrations of her nerves. I, I alone, and always I. . . . Ah! yes that alone is possession; that alone is true. Ah! I find myself without seeking, to-day! Sad night during which I will understand that my nature excludes me from the banquet. And Néo? Do I love Néo? Yesterday. . . . It was yesterday, at the very hour of this agony. . . . How simple everything is, how everything is classed according to order, how everything succeeds to everything naïvely! What a succession of miracles resolved with a truly divine and candid elegance. Inimitable juggler, hail! Thy sure movements are so rapid that I fail to follow the thread of the skein they sketch on space. How artfully you cheat life! And in the empty goblet, filled only with a mouldiness of death, think with what grace you pour for the assistants, the wine of eternal fecundations. I am but one of the black dots painted on your dice, and you make me spin around as you wish, divine juggler, inimitable juggler; but I have confidence in you, and I repeat with the chance priest, the word that says all things: Amen.

How cowardly it makes one to have lived, to have understood that no will power can burst the rhythm of life! Strength? It is foreseen in its measure and



its direction. Not a spark of fire shall be stolen !  
One spark only and I should fire the world. . . .  
So then one must keep out of the currents, far from  
the lightning and look on at those who die. . . .

And oneself. I look at myself, Ah! hop, frog!  
Thou art like the others, one of the puppets life  
swings on its wire!"

At that moment, Diomedes was asked by the  
servant for the funereal preparations. The grief of  
the woman was appeased; once skimmed of its first  
surprise, she could be heard moaning gently to her-  
self, without however it disturbing the assurance of  
her work. Smiling, she even excused Diomedes'  
clumsiness.

— Pull a little. There. . . . My mother's  
profession was to lay out, she used to take me with  
her. . . . Then I was a novice at the Sisters of  
Mercy. It is painful, it is sad. . . . To-morrow  
I will go and fetch a Sister to watch by her. Mother  
Sainte-Praxède, if she is free. Ah, Monsieur  
Diomedes, for the last forty years that she lays out  
people, many dead have passed through her hands.  
She knows what death is to be sure, yes, she knows.

As he was leaving, going from that room in which  
Fanette so many times had played with him, disrobed  
and supple, sumptuous, or moved by her readings,  
by her dreams, Diomedes felt in his throat, the  
strangling of a sob.

He cried long, nervously biting the fragrant hair of  
his little friend whose hands were crossed piously on  
the Book, as on a pillow of love.

(To be Continued.)

## Poems.

By F. S. FLINT.

### I.

London, my beautiful  
it is not the sunset  
nor the pale green sky  
shimmering through the curtain  
of the silver birch,  
nor the quietness;  
it is not the hopping  
of birds  
upon the lawn,  
nor the darkness  
stealing over all things  
that moves me.

But as the moon creeps slowly  
over the tree-tops  
among the stars,  
I think of her  
and the glow which her passing  
sheds upon men.

### II.

Dear one!  
you sit there  
in the corner of the carriage;  
and you do not know me;  
and your eyes forbid.

Is it the dirt, the squalor,  
the wear of human bodies,  
and the dead faces of our neighbours?  
These are but symbols.

You are proud; I praise you;  
your mouth is set; you see beyond us;  
I watch you; I love you;  
I desire you.

There is a quiet here  
within the thud-thud of the wheels  
upon the railway.

There is a quiet here  
within my heart,  
but tense and tender. . . .  
this is my station. . . .

### III.

Under the lily shadow  
and the gold  
and the blue and mauve  
that the whin and the lilac  
pour down on the water,  
the fishes quiver.

Over the green cold leaves  
and the rippled silver  
and the tarnished copper  
of its neck and beak,  
toward the deep black water  
beneath the arches,  
the swan floats slowly.

Into the dark of the arch the swan floats  
and the black depth of my sorrow  
bears a white rose of flame.

### IV.

IN THE GARDEN.

The grass is beneath my head;  
and I gaze  
at the thronging stars  
in the night.  
They fall . . . they fall . . .  
I am overwhelmed,  
and afraid.

Each little leaf of the aspen  
is caressed by the wind,  
and each is crying.

And the perfume  
of invisible roses  
deepens the anguish.

Let a strong mesh of roots  
feed the crimson of roses  
upon my heart;  
and then fold over the hollow  
where all the pain was.

### V.

TUBE.

You look in vain for a sign,  
for a light in their eyes. No!  
Stolid they sit, lulled  
by the roar of the train in the tube,  
content with the electric light,  
assured, comfortable, warm.  
Despair? . . .  
For a moment, yes:  
this is the mass, inert;  
intent on being the mass,  
unalarmed, undisturbed;  
and we, the spirit that moves,  
we leaven the mass,  
and it changes;  
we sweeten the mass,  
or the world  
would stink in the ether.



## On the Interference with the Environment.

### VI.—THE QUESTION OF OBSCENITY.

AS to obscenity, it will be said with much plausibility that an obscene exhibition in a public place makes it impossible for a person—or for many persons—to pass that way without suffering a penalty more serious than the mere necessity of enduring something distasteful. I reject this argument, not without having considered it.

Let us define our terms. The popular conception of obscenity (and the legal conception too) covers two very different things: first, the disgusting; second, that which stirs sexual feeling. The argument which I have just described as “plausible” cannot apply to the first of these two except in so far as certain sensitive people are moved to physical nausea by certain sights. I never heard of an actual case, however, in which a person who had eaten a good meal lost it by looking at anything publicly displayed, or in which anyone was saved from such an experience by the restrictive power of laws against obscenity. I conclude, therefore, that we do not need juridical defence on this side, and that we have now to do only with obscenity in the other sense.

Our experience with the laws against obscene literature teaches us that it is impossible to define obscenity so that a man can know, in numerous cases, what a court will hold to be obscene and what it will not; or even so that two courts can be counted on to agree with each other in their decisions on the same book. We have not merely the same uncertainty which the law exhibits in regard to actions which are in other respects near the dividing line of lawful and unlawful, but a much greater degree of uncertainty. An experienced prosecutor under the anti-obscenity laws eliminates the uncertainty as far as possible by learning the personal dispositions of the judges and bringing his case before a judge from whom he can expect favour. (My only authority for this statement is the autobiographical reminiscences published by the eminent prosecutors themselves, or by their friends on their behalf.) The net result of all this is that a man of ordinary prudence settles the question by regarding as probably legally obscene everything that opinions might differ on, and so the laws produce practically the effect of a prohibition of all such matter, to the considerable injury of the public. The mischief would be less, of course, if the range of difference of opinion on this topic were not so frightfully wide. But all this is directly against the principle that a man should be treated as innocent till those who know the facts can agree that he is guilty.

It appears, however, that it is found easier to define obscenity exhibited to the eye than obscenity in words; so the evils of the laws against obscene literature would not be absolutely duplicated by recognising it as a form of assault when an obscene sight is forced upon an unwilling person's attention in a public place.

But I observe that there seems to be no particular disposition to make obscene displays to the public in general. The substantial evils which Mr. Comstock works to suppress are those of the underhand circulation of obscenity. The men against whom his crusade is declared are in the business for cash, and make their money by not letting a man see their wares till he pays. If there were in even a few persons a disposition to inflict obscenity on the public, either from malice or from a quasi-religious devotion to such things, or from mere love of lubricity, a small expenditure of time and money would enable a man to annoy the public a deal without particular danger of detection. But nobody seems to devote to such business more time and money than is involved in chalking a short inscription, or a hardly recognisable drawing, on a wall. When there is complaint made

of an actually public exhibition of obscenity, the public verdict generally is that the complainant is wrong and the exhibition not obscene.

An instance of this absence of a disposition to offend even a squeamish sense of obscenity is furnished by the matter of sleeves. It is not supposed by the public that there is a law against going with bare arms; and bare arms are so often seen that their lawfulness is kept in everybody's mind. Nevertheless it is not considered quite the thing to go on the street sleeveless, or with sleeves rolled up far above the elbow, unless you are either at work or can make a plausible pretence that it is for work that your arms are bared. And accordingly people do not. The pretence that the arms are bared for work is doubtless stretched a bit in some cases, but on grown persons of either sex one does not see bare arms that are not covered by this pretence. This does not look as if there was great need of any restraint on such exhibitions as are likely to be objected to.

Still, such minimising of the issue is of very limited validity. We have to face the fact that the dominant part of the public finds the acme of obscenity in the mere exposure of the human body to view; and we cannot deny that there would be a good deal of exposure of the whole person under various circumstances if the prohibition were not rigorous. On many a beach and in many a stream boys and men would bathe without ceremony; men at work in hot weather would find that the more of their garments they laid off, the more efficient they grew; careless poverty would economise more and more in the matter of summer covering; a good many persons believe that the tanning of the skin by sunshine is good for the health, and that the reasons for the general custom of always wearing clothes are not worth a row of beans, and some of these persons would want to live up to their principles without retiring to a lonely place when their affairs did not call them to such a place; commercialised vice, which is cautious about its advertising so long as there are laws against it which will be enforced whenever it displeases the police, would try experiments in methods of advertising if this restraint were removed, and the time when my discussion begins to have practical import may well be the time when such restraints are removed. And, finally, it appears that there exists a form of insanity which, while not invariably accompanied by insanity in any other respect, manifests itself in a reckless determination to go naked. It is the same with the impulse toward nudity as it is with other natural human impulses—any one of them may have an intensity that will be undisputedly abnormal. If some fanatical ruler forbade all picture-making in his domains, a born painter like Leonardo da Vinci would doubtless have the prudence to conform to the law, but a born painter like William Blake would break the law and incur the penalty.

Indeed, substantially that experiment has been tried. In American collections of Alaskan Eskimo art are a few carvings which, instead of following the conventional routine of those tribes, show a marvellous lifelikeness and power of characterisation: if the carving shows a long team of dogs, every dog has his own individuality, his own psychology. Inquiry into the origin of these unique works of genius shows that some years ago there lived in Alaska an old fellow who was universally recognised as weak-minded; for he insisted on spending his time in carving, to the neglect of the practical duties of hunting and fishing; and he did not even do his carving properly in the style that centuries of tradition have fixed as proper for carving, but persisted in making his carved dogs look like *real* dogs! What could be more ridiculous? So he lived and died despised. Much good it does him that now, when he is dead, his works are being greatly admired by men of a foreign race in a foreign climate. Well, I say that when the artistic impulse is so dominant



that a man will thus neglect all his material interests to produce works of art that his neighbours do not even think well of, this is plain abnormality. So I do not necessarily imply anything as to whether the impulse toward nudity is a worthy or unworthy one when I speak of its abnormal development as furnishing, if one wishes to suppress it, all the difficulties of suppressing a mania. The case of Socrates is not far from parallel again. Or take the normal delight in building fires, and its development to an abnormal insistance. Lately there was an incorrigible pyromaniac whose incendiarism was quite unmanageable till, after two or three institutions had failed, he was sent to the asylum at Vineland, N.J. The superintendent had brains, and put him to work as stoker in the boiler house. He never makes any trouble, and is the most useful of servants: he takes the most perfect care of that fire—he is in just the place for which nature fitted him, and no happier man ever handled a shovel than he as he feeds his furnace. Well, just as you must either restrain the pyromaniac or put up with whatever mischief his fires may do, so you must either restrain the gynomaniac or put up with whatever mischief his nudity may do.

And the question ought not to be, if possible, whether it really does mischief. For if we take up that question we shall have no end to it. The practically important thing is that the point is not agreed on. We have numerous respectable people who believe that the sight of the naked human body, of either sex, has no more inherent tendency to rouse the sexual impulses than has the sight of the body clothed in any ordinary costume, and that if nudity became generally customary among us the ultimate result might well be a decrease of unchastity. This class includes pretty nearly everybody who writes books on the comparative moral customs of different nations, and it includes me. We have still more numerous people, still more respectable or at least still more respected, who hold the contrary view, that to exhibit the naked human person is to force upon a great part of the public an unwelcome but irresistible sexual impulse. Neither of these two classes will readily give up its belief for any argument that present circumstances permit us to bring. And there you are. Our business is to determine a reasonable basis on which people who hold these two views are to live together. If we cannot do that, our discussion is a failure. If we are not proposing a basis on which people can live together without all thinking alike, then our propositions have as their pre-requisite not merely a remote and problematical change in human nature, but an absolutely undesirable change. What I want is a plan by which men as they are can live together in peace. The present system, in which so great a part of every man's life is regulated by the threat of violence, is not what I call peace.

A further complication is the prospect of off-hand individual violence. A monument in honour of Heine, with sundry nude marble nymphs, was erected in New York a few years ago. After a little while a man rode up to it on his bicycle in the middle of the night, broke off all breakable parts of the nymphs with a hammer, and got safe away on his bicycle before the police found it out. He was never caught. If a man without clothes tried to go along one of our streets to-day, he would not last nearly so long, in the absence of police interference, as the Heine monument did. If the police undertook to protect him, it is not certain that their protection would be more effective than it was in the case of the monument. As long as the sight of the undisguised human figure is unfamiliar in a certain inhabited place, the person who exhibits it must reckon with a probability of stones and whip-lashes. And if anybody undertakes either the protection of that person or the protection of the public peace, the protector will have

(To be continued.)

## Women Who Did and Who Do Yet.

IN these days of hot discussion upon how to be happy when you ought to be married but aren't, we are apt to think Grant Allen opened the ball of yarn with his "Woman Who Did." Well, possibly he opened the ball of white yarn, but it is to Haldane Macfall to whom we are indebted for the first unravelling of this black yarn.

In the West Indies among the descendants of the negro slaves, who were imported there some hundred years or so ago, it is almost the universal custom for marriages to be solemnised about ten years or so after the family has come into being. Very probably this somewhat unconventional arrangement originated on account of economic determinism; it was cheaper to do without the luxury of the ceremony. Negro wages are not any too high in those islands, and what with the cost of the licence and the tip for the parson, and the cost of the ring, it was more convenient to postpone the celebration until the children were born and become old enough to be able to help defray the expense of rendering themselves legitimate. And why not? Are not the children the beneficiaries of a legal marriage?

I understand it is the custom among certain European peasants to defer marriage until the first child is obviously under way. The West India blacks marry after, say, the fifth child has begun to pay interest on its cost. The plan works well, too. Any West Indian will bear witness that the woman is never beaten severely by her spouse prior to the legal ceremony. She has at least a guarantee of happiness during the first few years of love; and, any way, if she is not happy with her incubus it is her own fault. It is very bad form in the West Indies for a girl to support at her washtub her spouse before she has the ring. Indeed, so strong a hold has custom upon the women that until a man legally marries he actually feels ashamed not to contribute to the support of his offspring and their mother.

Now, with a successful working experiment in marital freedom at our doors one would have thought that some of these hot gospellers upon the subject would have made the West Indies a study and reported, but no doubt it has been felt that the colour line must be drawn somewhere.

Haldane Macfall, however, has boldly plunged in the inky flood where others still stand shivering on the shore, and he plunged in, too, way back in 1898, with his "Wooings of Jezebel Pettyfer," when nobody in those days ever thought of finding gold for publishers by stirring up such sex problems. But 1898 was too early for such things, and the book never became known much except to the very wise and wicked.

But with all-conquering democracy hammering at the printers' door and demanding everything that's rare and good for everyone who has the price, a new edition has been brought out that will suffice to ameliorate the famine in Pettyfers for the time being.

The following quotation will give a taste of what's in store for the reader:—

She leaned against the doorpost and fidgeted with her fingers. "Oh, yes, I like yo', Dyle; I like yo'r spirit——"

"Dat enough!" said Dyle generously. "I is satisfied to marry yo' on dat——"

Jezebel laughed.

"Huh! marryin'? Marryin'! dat annuder pair o' stockin's," she said with biting contempt. "Where

"The Wooings of Jezebel Pettyfer." By Haldane Macfall, author of "The Masterfolk," &c. (Published by Simpkin, Marshall. 6/-.)



de money comin' from for de festival? I ax yo' dat! Yo' think I is goin' to have a low-down cheap weddin'? Huh!"—with scorn—"dat likely! Huh! not me! I not goin' to marry yo' and have yo' spending me money wid de help o' de law in riotous livin', just de same like yo' was a lawful married man. Huh! supposin' I marry yo'; supposin' yo' meet wid another gal—den dat bad for me. Supposin' I don't goin' to marry yo'; den supposin' you meet up wid another gal—den it all right—den I take up wid another gennelman. I isn't goin' to play second-best to no other gal."

"Den yo' no trust me honour, Jezebel?" said Dyle with pained accent.

"Huh! not me. How is I to know yo' is not loose in yo'r affections? Supposin' I get hankerin' arter some other feller *meself*! What den? And I is never quite sartin' sure, at de time being, which are de one I likes de best."

Dyle shifted his feet for departure.

"Den it appears to me," said he, "it are about time I was liftin' me feet and gittin' travellin', Jezebel; and lookin' around for somethin' to happen. I has catch'd de bad luck."

"Listen to me, Dyle!" Jezebel came to his side and put her hand on his shoulder. "Yo' has come'd along and tell'd me yo' is bound to marry me or yo' is bound to git a livin'. Dat serious. I allow dat. Yo' is in bad luck, Dyle, sartin' sure."

She stood silent for a few moments. Then she sighed, and said, as though making the best of things: "Well den, it amounts to dis here: I no mind livin' wid yo' here in dis house. But de marryin' it can come later on."

"Den Jezebel, yo' is agin makin' me a legitimate man!" said Dyle, rather hurt but relieved.

"De marryin' it can come later on," repeated Jezebel.

Dyle got up and took her hands in his.

"Jezebel, old gal," he said, "I is agree'ble to settle down here wid yo' from dis evenin'. I has ax'd yo' to marry I. Yo' says not just yet—yo' is bound to have a proper festival wid heaps o' style—I allow dat. Dat are a holy and proper feelin' in yo' sentiments. De folks in de Scriptures dey always reckon'd to have a first-class supe'law weddin' breakfast. Dat are sound Scriptures. Therefore I is ready to oblige yo'. Nevertheless I is goin' to be real pleased de day yo' make Jehu Sennacherib Dyle a legitimate man."

He put his arms about her, and kissed her on the mouth. And she giggled and allowed it.

The last thing that night Jezebel stood at her doorway clad in a white nightdress. Before she closed the door she flung a bowlful of corn and rice across the threshold to keep out ghouls that would otherwise enter crevices or squeeze through the keyhole, and, taking human shape of corpses, with cold and clammy lips suck the blood from the sleeping folk within the house.

Besides, it saved Jezebel rising to feed the fowls in the early morning.

Mr. Macfall was a British Army officer stationed in Jamaica, and has his knowledge of life there from actual contact. He has long since resigned his commission and is now devoting his time to Art and Literature and other inconsequentialities.

G. W.

## Violet Hunt.

**W**HENEVER a woman goes to write a novel she first chooses herself as heroine; she then decides that she had better take someone else, and ends up by choosing herself again. If she doesn't do that she sermonises. Even in *Romola* you always have the horrid suspicion that Tito will

throw off his disguise and appear as Mary Evans. And Adam Bede is an allegorical figure representing George Eliot's better nature. It is probably due to the pernicious influence of this author that women adopt these evil courses. And her indifference to style is typical.

After thus betraying myself into writing the "whenever a woman" sort of generality I shall have to hedge and say that Violet Hunt writes like a woman better than any other woman. After all if women are incapable of the indirect method of writing—like a great many men—if they will persist in writing like George Eliot instead of like Flaubert, and if they will cosset and scold and tease and argue about their characters, why in Heaven's name shouldn't they? It is much more reasonable to take them for what they are worth, as writers belonging to the great second class, like Rousseau, and not to the small first class, like Flaubert. So much for generalities.

Violet Hunt has two qualities in her books—one in some of her books—one of which some men have possessed; the other is her own particular possession. I refer to her gift of humour and to her gift of insight into the mind of "flappers." Violet Hunt's flappers are perfect; when she writes of them you feel as if—like Florizel—you would have her do that always. Her early book *The Maiden's Progress* and the later *Celebrity at Home* give her the best opportunity for displaying her genius in this direction. If anyone is curious—as I have been—to know exactly what those strange female creatures with long legs and pig-tails are thinking about let him read chapter six of the *Maiden's Progress*. He will arise a more well-informed man, feeling more scared than ever of the omnipotent sex in every stage of its development. I swear these flappers are a new *frisson*. Violet Hunt may have given us a new artistic pleasure—she has—by portraying them, but she has also added a new intellectual horror. They are like a Poe story. Listen to this, part of the reflections of a little girl of fifteen at a tennis party:—

"I wonder if I could eat another *petit four*? I've had six, but then William has had eight. We were beginning to make the dish look silly, so I sent him away to field for balls. He was cross. He's a year older than me. He's at Eton. Poor Eton! I manage him of course. I manage everybody. It's all my doing that we took this sweet Vicarage for three months, and didn't go to Folkestone or Eastbourne, or some other unearthly place. There is never anything for me to do there, and I bore myself to extinguishers. But here there are woods and tool sheds and runaway bulls and everything exciting, and not too many old frumps to come and call.

"There are only the Deverals, and they're at Dunse Court, a mile off. Fine old county family—don't they just know it? The old lady's terrible, but I don't trouble about her much except to stick teasing balls in her skirt when she isn't looking. Almeria, the girl, never says anything; and as for the boys, Arthur and Fred—well Billy Danvers is worth a hundred of them."

And so on over pages. Here are we, respectable quiet citizens, quite certain that there are no dragons and ogres left in the world, confident that even if the Germans do invade us we shan't be any worse off than we are, relying on the power of the policeman, and all the time there are these scheming, ingenious little devils in our midst. "I manage him, of course. I manage everybody." And she does, that's the devil of it, she does. At least, she does when she's a little older, and is called Tempe Vero-Taylor and lives in another book. We all ought to form a Society for Mutual Defence against Flappers.

As a matter of fact the flapper doesn't take up a great bulk in *The Maiden's Progress*, but there is a kind of portentousness about her, a sort of veiled horror like the prophecies of Cassandra. But The



Celebrity at Home is entirely written by a—I mean that it is written in the first person and that the heroine, or the chief character, or whatever you like to call her, is one of these child-woman-devils. Almost at the very beginning she says that it is nice to do what you like even if it isn't good for you. And she acts up to her device. She does do exactly as she likes, and gets everyone into all sorts of scrapes and taxes Violet Hunt's ingenuity to the utmost to get them out again. Naturally enough we know exactly whom we are to like and whom not to like. I suspected from the first that George was a bit of a scoundrel, and though the flapper is his own daughter I'm quite sure she'd admit it in that nasty frank way of hers. And "Mother," poor dear, one sympathises most awfully—but after all one can't talk about books so familiarly as if all the people were alive and everyone knew them. But that's just the thing in *The Celebrity*. It ought to begin "once upon a time." And if one can get out of one's stolid unbelief and get into its fairy-tale feeling it's just as real as *Cinderella*, and all about people one might meet any day.

It is not so easy to talk lightly about a person's wit as one does about her flappers. It is a more serious and personal matter, like praising someone to her face for being pretty or having a charming lisp. Still one can't talk about Violet Hunt's work without referring to it. Her wit is really her most valuable quality. Whenever she gets serious one always hopes she'll say something witty soon and make up for it. If you want to read her serious books with the same interest as the others you must read them first. The witty ones spoil you for the others.

Violet Hunt's wit is quite personal and amazing. It is inexhaustible, careless, slap-dash, and altogether woman's humour. It is hardly ever forced, hardly ever not quite "it"; and then one realises that it is rather from carelessness than from lack of inventiveness. She is so profuse that she has no time to worry about quality. The marvel is that she should write so much so well. She is like the editions of M. Anatole France—never *épuisé*. Ideas rush into her head, get jumbled up—she has little power in direct thinking—she perceives an incongruity, writes it down, and you have a witticism. It isn't the polished epigram, thank Heaven, but it is at least the spontaneous joke. And those of us who like to be amused, who frankly want to be amused, grin and applaud and feel better afterwards.

Hers is not exactly a quotable sort of wit. The manner is everything, I suppose. You get involved in it and read along waiting for the next joke, which always comes, and then you go on again. It is all very fascinating and delightful. The odd thing is that as the flapper gets older the wit gets less spontaneous; I suppose the responsibilities of life, falling in love, and so on, make even a flapper less cheerful. For though one reads the *Celebrity's Daughter* with a joyful and quiet mind it has not exactly the same *flair* about it. And then when you've got used to thinking George a villain and Mother an ill-used woman, it's so hard to have to change your mind and decide that George is ill-used and Mother perfectly disgusting. And then I can't forgive Violet Hunt for putting George into prison. Dear old George, with his affectations and his cranky house and his rotten books and his lady Scilly, it was mean to put him in gaol. (You must excuse my talking about "George" in this familiar way. It is the fault of an author who will use the personal style and not the cold impersonal Flaubertian method. I quite believe in George, with a sort of pathetic faith, like that of a Pekinese in a bad mistress. I was awfully glad when George was made Censor of Plays.)

It is a truism to say that an author is to be esteemed for what is original and unique in his work. But it is on that ground that I decline to enter into a long discussion of Violet Hunt's more serious work. Her comedy is quite her own; other people

have written seriously about the social difficulties she deals with and have done it quite as well. Moreover—now that the flapper is grown up—the feeling of intrigue is wearing to a simple person. Violet Hunt's plots are the most complicated in existence. Her suspense, as she works them out, must be terrible to endure. I admit that works like the *Doll*, for instance, are extremely effective and clever presentations of modern society and its problems, dangers and weaknesses. I admit that it is probably all quite true, and that she can draw a man without making him either a tailor's assistant or a sanguinary villain. But we are all so weary of the eternal discussion. When anyone comes along who wants to argue or prove anything, we are inclined to say "Yes, yes, yes. But for God's sake shut up and go away." And so the good argumentative writers as well as the bad are just thrown aside, and we listen to anyone who will tell us a story, like Mr. Conrad, or invent extraordinary untrue beauty, like M. Reiny de Gourmont, or amuse us, like Violet Hunt in *The Celebrity at Home*, and *The Celebrity's Daughter*.

And all that is only reiterating the commonplace remark that if you write something really humorous nobody will pay any attention whatever to your serious work.

RICHARD ALDINGTON.

## Le Theatre du Vieux Colombier.

THIS theatre is a little box of a place, seating about four hundred people. The decorative scheme is simple; white walls, and a white ceiling with two rows of big, square, orange-coloured lanterns hanging from it. The low arch is black, with a little door on each side, and green curtains to shut out the stage. Unfortunately, footlights are used instead of the more modern Fortenay systems for diffusing light; and a big prompter's box hides far too much of the stage. These faults, which are merely faults of construction, will probably be remedied later.

Besides plays, the Director has announced a series of "Conferences," half on the classic poets, and half on modern French poets. Among the latter are MM. Claudel, Jammes, Verhaeren, Vielé-Griffin and others. Yesterday, the first conference of the modern series was given. It was on the poetry of Mallarmé and Verlaine. M. André Gide was the speaker. From time to time in his discourse M. Gide stopped to allow some member of the "Vieux Colombier" troupe to illustrate his point by reciting the poem in question. These lectures should become very popular. Yesterday no fewer than two hundred people were turned away.

The inaugural programme consisted of a one-act play by Molière and a translation of Heywood's "Killed by Kindness" (*une Femme tuée par la Douceur*). In English this play is dull, in French it is duller. How the company succeeded in making it interesting (and they did) is incomprehensible. Two scenes in particular were very effective. Mr. Yeats has better plays—Synge's, Boyle's, and his own—but even so, the Irish players have not surpassed the two scenes I mention. And their simple scenery has been surpassed only by the first act of "Le Sacre du Printemps." The décors owe much to Mr. Gordon Craig. The acting was not too good: it was competent but not "modern." It contained no element of newness. But then I was perhaps unfortunate in the play I saw. I would rather see them perform Mr. Yeats' play "On Baile's Strand."

The setting for the two scenes mentioned above could not have cost over £25; and their effectiveness was marvellous.

If this theatre, only a month old now, improves as there is every hope of its doing, it will be one of the most interesting theatres in the world.

H. S. C.



## Correspondence.

NOTE TO CORRESPONDENTS.—*While quite willing to publish letters under noms de plume, we make it a condition of publication that the name and address of each correspondent should be supplied to the Editor.*—ED.

### THE EPIDEMIC OF LAW.

To the Editor of THE EGOIST.

MADAM,

The enclosed will interest you in connection with the statement in your issue of December 1st to the effect that in "the State of New York covering the period of ten years ending with December 31, 1912, the increase in output of the legislative mills during that decade, in proportion to the population, was so great that were the increase maintained in the same ratio for the succeeding ten years, at the end of that term over half of the adult male population would be in the meshes of the law or engaged in the administration of it. To be exact, thirty-one per cent. would be connected with the public service in some way and twenty-six per cent. would be imprisoned or prosecuted. It is true our statistician added the naïve proviso: if all laws were strictly enforced. A saving "if"!

In addition to the actual statistics upon which the above calculations are based, it is to be borne in mind that actually a condition of affairs exists of which the instance of divorce will provide an illustration. Although divorces are reckoned at one in twelve of all marriages in the United States, they are really far more numerous in proportion and among others for these reasons.

(1) Good Catholics do not get divorces.

(2) Almost no Jews get divorces. It is a common boast among them that "there has never been 'yahoulah' (fraudulent bankruptcy) nor a divorce in our family."

(3rd and most important) The poor do not get divorces. They cannot afford it, and it is not necessary. If Bridget and Pat quarrel too much, or Pat does not bring home his wages, she throws a flat-iron at him, and won't give him any grub, and he takes his kit of tools and goes to Philadelphia. They are practically divorced.

I have among my clients (who are not numerous as I am not in active practice) a woman whose husband abuses her. She is poor, and after considering her remedies I told her to take a carving knife and tell him she would stick it in him if he struck her. That accomplished a practical divorce, and relieves her of his abuse.

In another case, the lady and her husband simply cannot agree. She lives in Europe and he lives here and they alternate about every six months. That is a practical divorce.

In the third case, also among my clients, the husband could not contribute to her support, and the wife simply took her furniture, moved away, and refuses to consort with him. Fear of public opinion keeps him from making any demand on her, or on the children. That is a practical divorce.

My own estimate is that roughly, one marriage in three results in what is equivalent to divorce.

I would be glad to know how this strikes you.

It is not possible accurately to state the number of laws to which a citizen of the State of New York is subject because many sections of the Code of civil procedure, for instance, contain three or four "laws"; on one paragraph there have been thousands of decisions to try to find out what it means. However, as accurately as can be calculated, Mr. E. L. Heydecker, the author of a voluminous digest of laws, and I, calculated that they number twenty-one thousand two hundred and sixty (21,260). This includes the laws of the United States, but does not include the absolutely innumerable ordinances, regu-

lations and rules issued by police, fire, tenement, water, streets, licenses, Aldermatic, dock, charity and other departments, which have all the force of law. You can get in prison probably quicker for disobeying an ordinance of the Health Department or a traffic regulation of the Police Department than you can for disobeying the holy tariff law.

BOLTON HALL.

### MR. HAWKINS ON MR. CARTER.

To the Editor of THE EGOIST.

MADAM,

Dear Editor if yewll fergive me fer being so konfideshul loike wot i wants to say is this that ere Untly Carter es a jolly good chap e is wot i allways ses is wots the good of it all? all this ere poetry and stile and tawkin and jawin yer cad off like the missus does if yer as a drop but Untly es got stile e as tawk abaht shikespier and g. r. Sims wy they aint nowheres in it. i ses give me a feller wot knows is bisness i ses an dont go gassin abaht things wot fellers like us dont know and dont want ter know i ses oo wants ter ere a lot o jaw abaht immiges and forun langwidges and sich? call it dam blarsted forun cheek i do if youll pawdon me missy fer sayin so thow yewre a b.a. still i rekkon the bord schools good enuf fer Untly and ine and chaps like us wot as to rool the kuntry

dear missy i wants yew ter write an tell Untly that me an my mates we loike is stile we do an if he loikes ter kum dahn ar elly baht arf pas nine satdy nite weel giv im a nice ot dish a pigs trotters and sum beer an pudin an if so be e loikes a gaime o aipny nep we don min taikin a hand or a bit o kok-fightin like jes ter amewse us pore fellers an tell Untly from us that e ort to be primminister e ort its a shime thats wot it is fer a feller like that ter be waisted on jurnalissum dear missy tell im not ter ferget next satdy arf pas nine crooks elly ol kent rowd clos ter the ol megpy and gawd hless yer Untly

Henery Hawkins.

### THE INDIVIDUALIST.

To the Editor of THE EGOIST.

MADAM,

Miss Alice Groff asserts that "there is no 'the' individual." Will she tell me to what she refers when she speaks of Huntly Carter? Does she refer to my individuality as distinct from that individuality which I call Alice Groff?

HUNTLY CARTER.

### EDITORIAL.

Letters, &c., intended for the Editor should be personally addressed: Ainsdale, England.

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